

LABOR  
IN EUROPE  
AND AMERICA

---

---

SAMUEL GOMPERS

21  
120

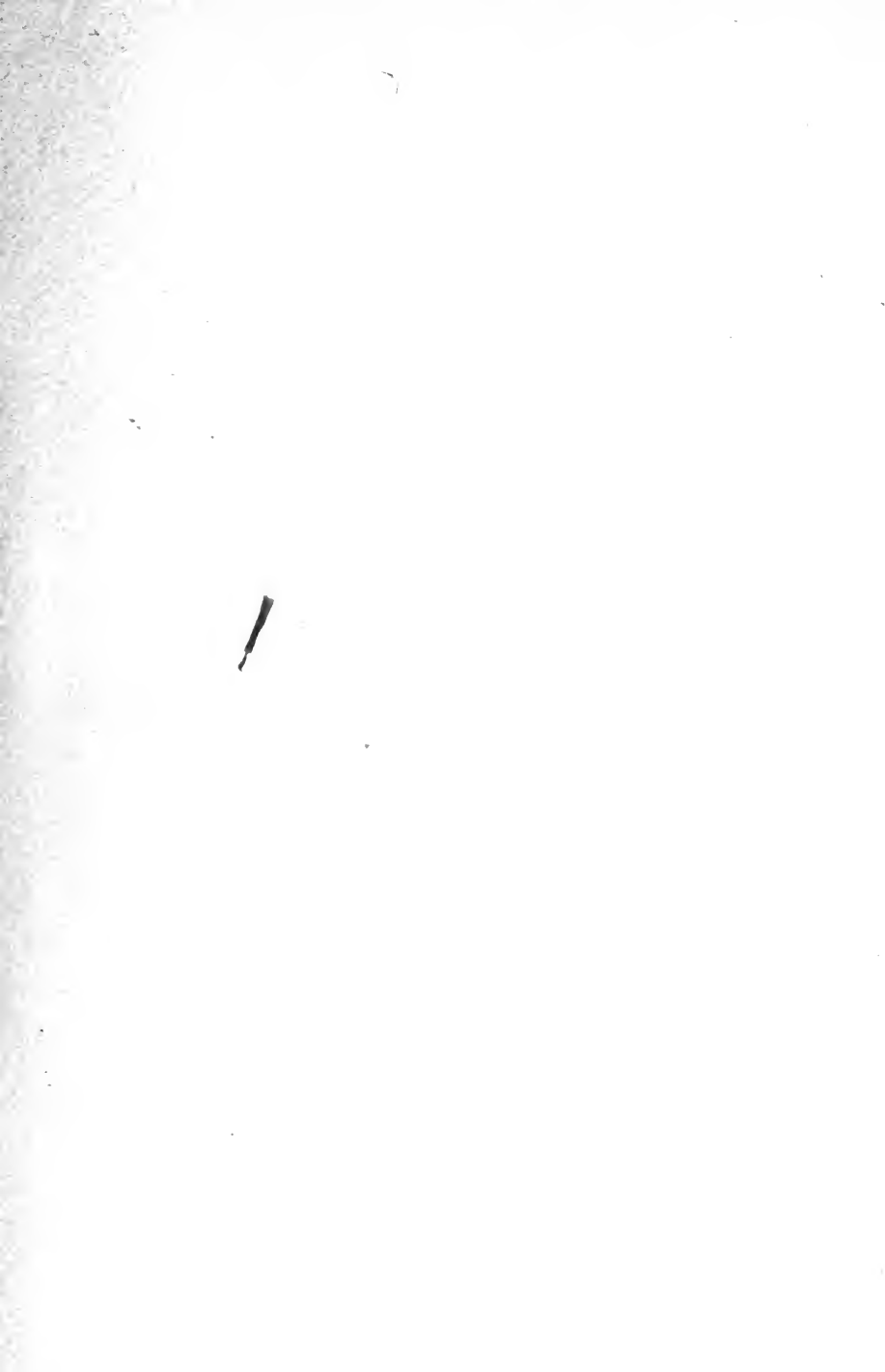
LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

*Class*



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation









to the  
Angellia



Sam Compers.

# LABOR

# EUROPE AND AMERICA

BY

**PRESIDENT OF**

**PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS FROM  
AN AMERICAN VIEWPOINT OF LIFE  
AND CONDITIONS OF WORKING  
MEN IN GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE,  
HOLLAND, GERMANY, ITALY, ETC.**



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON  
MCMX

HD 4855  
.G7

Copyright, 1910, by HARPER & BROTHERS

*All rights reserved*

Published May, 1910.

*Printed in the United States of America*

TO THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
CONGRESS

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
BY WAY OF PREFACE . . . . .	V
THE UNDERWORLD OF AN OCEAN STEAMER . . . . .	I
<del>+</del> ENGLISH LABOR—IN PARLIAMENT, FACTORY AND SLUM . . . . .	12
<del>+</del> A WEEK IN LONDON . . . . .	27
FRANCE—ITS MANY PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS . . . . .	45
BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, AMSTERDAM, ETC. . . . .	59
THE REMARKABLE GROWTH OF TRADE-UNIONISM IN GER-	
MANY . . . . .	71
THE REAL INSPIRATION TO-DAY IN PILSEN . . . . .	81
THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER AND HER FELLOW-LABORERS . . . . .	92
MUNICH A MODEL TRADE-UNION CENTER . . . . .	105
THE SWISS LABOR MOVEMENT—A DAY IN COLOGNE. . . . .	118
<del>+</del> AT THE PARIS CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRE-	
TARIAT . . . . .	129
<del>+</del> AT THE BRITISH TRADE-UNION CONGRESS AT IPSWICH . . . . .	144
THE AWAKENING IN ITALY . . . . .	160
OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES COME TO STAY . . . . .	172
GENOA AND TURIN—A DAY'S WORK IN EACH . . . . .	185
PLAIN WATER AND PURE AIR AT A PREMIUM . . . . .	197
<del>+</del> THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE . . . . .	210
<del>+</del> WAGES AND COST OF LIVING . . . . .	222
<del>+</del> CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING . . . . .	236
<del>+</del> TRADE-UNIONISM IN THE VARIOUS NATIONS . . . . .	249
NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL . . . . .	261
<del>+</del> OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS . . . . .	274





## BY WAY OF PREFACE

How I came to make this trip to Europe is explained in the following passage of my report as President to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor held in Toronto, November, 8-20, 1909:

"For two succeeding conventions the fraternal delegates from the British Trade Union Congress, on behalf of their movement, extended an invitation to me to visit their congress and make an investigation of labor conditions in England. We had some correspondence with the International Secretariat relative to participation in the International Trade Union Conference. Because of the pending elections of 1908, I requested the convention of 1907 not to direct me to accept the invitation.

"At the Denver Convention in 1908 one of the committees took cognizance of the matter and presented the following report, which was unanimously adopted by a rising vote of the convention:

"Your committee recommends the indorsement of what the president has to say under this heading, and expresses the hope that the interchange of fraternal visits may be continued and extended. We therefore recommend that the convention concur in the recommendation made by the Executive Council to the effect that a representative

## BY WAY OF PREFACE

of the American Federation of Labor attend the next convention of the International Conference of Trade Unions, which will meet shortly after the close of the British Trades Union Congress, and having in mind the report made by the fraternal delegates to the British Trades Union Congress, we recommend that the convention concur in the request made to send Mr. Gompers as our special representative to the British Trades Union Congress. We further recommend that he be instructed to attend the International Congress of Trade Unions, and that he visit such other countries as the Executive Council may deem advisable.'

"The Executive Council authorized me to visit several countries in Europe for study and rendering such assistance as might be mutually helpful to the workers everywhere. The resolution just quoted indicates that there was a misapprehension upon our part as to when the International Trade Union Conference was to be held. However, the International Secretary, Mr. Carl Legien, of Berlin, when informed that I had been authorized to attend the conference, consulted by correspondence with the officers of the trade unions of the various countries, and they voted to hold the Congress in Paris, 1909, instead of in Stockholm, 1910, as had been previously resolved.

"I also received an invitation from the officers of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Great Britain to attend their annual convention at Blackpool, England. A number of invitations were extended to me from representative labor men and government officials to visit their respective cities and countries.

"In the course of the tour in Europe, taken in obedience to your mandate, I made studies of the labor movement and the conditions of the wage-workers in the following places:

## BY WAY OF PREFACE

"United Kingdom—Liverpool, Dublin, Blackpool, Manchester, London, and Ipswich; France—Calais and Paris; Belgium—Brussels and Antwerp; Holland—Amsterdam; Germany—Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, and Cologne; Bohemia—Prague and Pilsen; Austria—Vienna; Hungary—Budapest; Italy—Milan, Rome, Naples, Genoa, and Turin; Switzerland—Berne and Basle. Brief visits were made to other cities—The Hague, Bremen, Dresden, Verona, Venice, Mayence—sufficient to widen to some extent the general field of observation.

"The more important of the gatherings attended were: (1) the tenth annual general meeting of the General Federation of British Trade Unions held at Blackpool, July, 1, 2; (2) the sixth conference of the International Secretariat of Trade Unions held at Paris, August 30-31, and September 1; (3) the forty-second annual British Trade Union Congress held at Ipswich, England, September 6-11. Special central labor committee meetings were attended in a number of cities visited, besides labor addresses which were made on a number of occasions. In all the places visited, both the labor and the general news press gave much space to the action of the American unions in sending a delegate on a general mission to Europe."

The spirit in which I looked upon the Old World in my journey, and some of the broad and deep and lasting impressions made upon me when looking back over my weeks of hurried travelling, are reflected in an address I was called on to make in New York soon after my return. In part, I then said:

"The United States is, both through fortuitous circumstances and its civic and industrial development, in the

## BY WAY OF PREFACE

lead of the world. Indisputably our people do not stand under the dreaded shadow of war, which is the case constantly in the countries having large standing armies, with aristocracies of officers associated with the classes to whom war might be financially or politically profitable. The incessant preparations for war and the ever-present possibilities of war in Europe only result in retarding human progress. The burden of standing armies especially falls upon the wage-earners.

"We have within our borders the largest area of free trade in the civilized world. The continual costly interruptions to commerce by the tariff walls that sub-divide Europe; the limitations of tariff systems within the boundaries of cities in the same country, as well as the boundaries of each country, to the consequent detrimental effects upon the production of farm and factory, entail national losses not incurred by us in anything like the same degree. The scores of languages spoken on the Continent of Europe are obviously a hindrance to economic and general intellectual development. Where a commercial man in Europe spends years of his youth in the quiet of schools acquiring perhaps three foreign languages under the delusion that it is education, energetic young America goes to work, moves about in our country, picks up the necessary qualifications for several callings, and either as journeyman or in any other position takes his place among the big machines, or in the complicated organization of a large industry, and helps turn out a product the cost of which is the lowest in the world.

"In no European country are our common schools equalled in their opportunities for education, in their inexpensiveness to the scholars, in their quality as a nursery of wholesome manly and womanly sentiment. Comparing the railway systems of Europe with those of

## BY WAY OF PREFACE

America, the traveller is obliged to look downward and backward, for in that respect Europe is half a century behind time. The product of the American press, taken in its wider scope, its magazines, its newspapers, its books, is a marvel to Europeans in output and cheapness of price, as well as in richness of interest to all members of society.

"Not the least difference by far lies in the rejection by us of the idea of caste. We have innumerable social circles, but none are secure in hereditary titles or other settled exclusive privileges by which they can permanently take precedence of the people in other circles.

"We have done with kings and czars and nobles. Our heroes are men and women. In every public gathering of our citizens the great majority present rejoice that the hard work of their forefathers helped to build up this democratic government. It is this democratic sentiment that makes our republic possible and progressive, and that regards the relation of our people to the laws as equals. We may be unequal in physique, in mental gifts, in acquirements, and character, but the insistence is among us. I repeat—before the law we are equals.

"In Europe the higher orders of caste, with family prerogatives and privileges of property and in law, form a political power and assure a social standing which democracies deny. In America also the full scope of political rights is recognized in our fundamental legal principles, and commonly in their practice. These are the right of choice by us of lawmakers and administrators, the rights of petition, of assembly, of freedom of thought and of religion, of free speech and a free press. Provision exists for a test under our Constitution of every one of these rights, as they may not yet be completely defined in every aspect of our rapidly developing industrial society.

## BY WAY OF PREFACE

"In the clash of interests it may become the duty of some of the standard-bearers of certain groups of our citizens to set out to ascertain the truth with respect to what they and their fellow-members believe to be the rights of those groups under the law and our Constitution, and if they act under the advice of men who in consequence of their legal training, probity, and character have won the respect of the nation, and especially if they find division of opinion upon the questions at issue among the judges upon the bench, these standard-bearers have no choice but to state and to restate their opinions, respectfully, yet firmly, and even spiritedly, to their fellow-citizens, and to carry the issue on to the court of last resort. We protest against the conception that a law is broken until it is finally and fully decided what is the law.

"Those who contribute to making the law clear, definite, and settled perform a public service, and in the mean time if the clamor and misrepresentation of opponents put them in a false position before the general public, they must wait in patience and fortitude until the day when the nation has spoken the last word, either through the highest judicial tribunal, where bias or prejudice or misconception is not to be expected, or through a change by legislation affecting the points at issue.

"In Europe the germ of a great awakening is evident on all hands. Much is going on there among the nations which will contribute to their own and our higher attainment. Industry, commerce, the means of transmitting information and enlightenment, and the intermingling of peoples coming from their country to ours, and moving from one European land to another, are making and will continue to make a broader and deeper fraternity than has ever been brought about in the history of man. As

## BY WAY OF PREFACE

for our own people, the men of labor have always stood for home and country. They have done their share in bearing the burden and doing yeoman service in defence of liberty and justice. In return they ask for and insist upon that justice, that equality before the law without which a republican form of government is impossible. Organized labor is in accord with the fundamental principle of the Declaration of Independence—that all men are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."





LABOR IN EUROPE AND  
AMERICA



# LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

THE UNDERWORLD OF AN OCEAN STEAMER

LIVERPOOL, *July 1, 1909.*

SAILING from New York Saturday, June 19, the *Baltic* brought us to Liverpool Sunday, the 27th. A smooth sea, sunshine in daytime, moonlight at night, very nearly record runs of the ship for every twenty-four hours—these were the transit features of the voyage. A sociable and democratic company of about four hundred passengers, little overdressing or other vain show, dancing evenings on the deck for the young folk, the “solution” of every form of commercial, international, or labor problem in the smoking-room parliament—these were the social features of the first-cabin group. No thrilling incidents occurred; no icebergs were seen; no collisions threatened; no scandals tried in the “whispering courts”; nothing was to be observed more remarkable than the reading of the Sunday services of the Church of England by the purser in the main saloon.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

As my mission to Europe is largely for the purpose of making what observations of working-class conditions the time of my visit permits, I wrote to the captain of the *Baltic* asking permission to go over the vessel to see how her wage-workers fared. In reply he sent a very courteously delivered verbal message by the purser to the effect that the latter official would at any time place himself at my service for a visit of inspection. Accordingly, having made an appointment at a certain hour with the purser, I waited on him at his office, to be told that, as his time was almost fully taken up by his engagements, he could devote but twenty minutes to the inspection; but if I preferred it he would send with me as a substitute one of the stewards. With a steward, therefore, and an American companion, I went the usual rounds of those parts of the vessel which are shown to favored first-class passengers. As we passed along, the guide glibly recited his well-conned lesson as to the vessel's wondrous bigness and the marvels of its operation. All of which was admirable, indeed, as befitted a transporting machine designed to carry with safety a population equal to that of a considerable village.

The *Baltic* is certificated by the British and American maritime authorities to carry 426 first-class passengers, 420 second, and 1195 third, and a crew of 370; in all, 2411 "souls," as the expression is among seamen. I am reliably informed that, despite this limit of passengers and crew, the *Baltic*, as well as other steamers bound for the port of New York, frequently

## UNDERWORLD OF AN OCEAN STEAMER

carry over 2000 third-class passengers. Our guide, the steward, showed us the various pantries and kitchens for each class, and the bakeshop where the bread is made to fill the "souls" of all classes. Rather rapidly he walked us through the second-class lounge and smoke room, through the steerage quarters, and to the landing at the top of steep and narrow ladder-like iron stairways that led to an infernally hot place far below, judging from the fierce waves of heat that rose and enveloped us where we stood. "Visitors never go down there," said our guide; "it's too hot." And he led us away quickly—so quickly and determinedly that to both my American friend and myself his act signified and commanded "No admission."

I asked where the sailormen were lodged. "In the fo'k'sel," he replied; "but visitors never go there. The sailors work four-hour watches, so the fo'k'sel always has a lot of chaps in it asleep, and visitors might wake 'em up." This explanation seemed to voice also our guide's pity for the poor sailors; by making it he successfully kept us out of the fore-castle. And in another moment he had us back at the first-class companionway, and was bidding us good-bye—with thanks.

Well, of course, not being an official inspector, I had seen all parts of the ship to which one might penetrate whose relations to the company were but those of a temporary patron. I had been treated most politely; but when back in my steamer-chair I found myself musing on the probably somewhat similar superficial character on occasions of what

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

constitutes "investigations." The way to truth is often blocked by polite attentions.

However, by dint of questioning, a glimpse at the life of the stewards was obtained and their wage scale learned, and besides we managed to see the steerage. The stewards on the *Baltic*, as on all the European transatlantic liners, receive £3 (\$15) per round trip, and make at most twelve trips a year; that is, they receive in wages less than \$200 a year. What the companies fail to pay the stewards in wages the passengers are by force of circumstances required to make up in "tips." Little wonder that the stewards faithfully "work" their charges for the "tips"!

In maintaining, as one of their firmest institutions, the "tipping" system, the steamship companies manifest a shrewd perception of their own interests. Tip-takers rarely, if ever, strike. Every eager tip-seeker studies the short and sure route to the shilling or the pound awaiting his quest in the liberal passenger's pocket. The tipped servant's vocabulary of lip-gratitude, his gestures of obsequiousness, his methods of forcing upon his intended victim a series of subtle and unnecessary attentions, his habitual air of profound deference—what is all this but the practice of a profession in which the most successful need have the least heart or manliness? Is it not an unhappy if not degrading occupation, from which the great majority following it would gladly escape? From my own investigations I have no hesitancy in answering the question in the affirmative. And the tip-takers may—nay, will—become organized in the

## UNDERWORLD OF AN OCEAN STEAMER

protective fold of the trade-union movement. The time will surely come when, as is already the case in certain English systems of restaurants, the signs will go up in ocean steamships—"No tips allowed!" Then will the relations between passenger and steward be those worthy of man to man, each honoring his own position and the walk in life of the other, and each dealing with the other without deceit—a relationship which, though not impossible, is difficult now.

Meantime the steamship companies make a pretty penny out of the stewards' tips; for it is not to be forgotten that the passengers' tips go really, not to the steward, but to the treasury of the line, which is relieved of paying him his wages. With, say, five hundred passengers, first and second class, each on the average giving \$10 for tips on a trip, \$5000 is added to the dividends of the stock-holders. And that worm, the passenger, has never yet turned! To add to this, there is deducted from the \$15 per month paid to the stewards one shilling and nine-pence (forty-three cents) for "breakage," and this deduction is made every month whether anything is broken or not. In Liverpool, one of the union men not only confirmed this fact, but added: "Yes, it is true; and the stewards seldom break anything. Indeed, they pay for and ought to own, not only the glass and crockery of the ships, but also the silver-ware." Not a bad stroke of business this, requiring less skill than the work of the "confidence" men and the professional gamblers in the steamer's smoke-room.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

The following story, authenticated by a fellow-traveller, is of interest. A passenger, at the end of a recent trip, made this little speech to a steward: "Here's the minimum tip for you. I am obliged by custom to give you something, but I'll not make it enough to help induce the steamship company to still further reduce your paltry pay. But I pledge you that the day you go on strike for better pay and no tips I'll send \$25 to help you win."

It would be well worth that sum to every American passenger to rid himself of the tipping nuisance on his steamship voyages.

In the engine-room of a transatlantic steamer the stokers and coal-passers and trimmers work four hours on and eight hours off. The stokers receive \$22.50, and the coal-passers and trimmers \$20 per month. I was unable to see their sleeping-quarters; but their labor representative in Liverpool told me that their "bunk-rooms" were anything but models for light and ventilation, with fully a Turkish bath temperature. I saw the place on the *Baltic* where the men of this class eat. It is a small, narrow compartment, to be likened to a damp, hot stable. Benches and tables are of the rudest possible construction. Those I saw at their meal had bread, tea, and a sort of stew. The *Baltic* has sixty of these men.

The thirty-six sailors of the *Baltic* work four hours on and four off; they are paid \$20 per month. They were sleeping in their clothes when I saw them. Their bunks ranged around against the vessel's side in the fore-castle. The discolored mattresses and



## UNDERWORLD OF AN OCEAN STEAMER

blankets looked ready for the rag-shop or the disinfecting chamber.

On contemplating the lot of the sailors, stokers, and coal-handlers of a steamship, one asks himself how it is that men can be found who will consent to get down to such dreary, painful, and ill-requited toil, performed under such hard conditions. As a fact, every man to whom escape is possible will flee from that sort of life. It must be the more helpless characters, from whatever cause, who remain. One thing is to be remembered. The men are bound to work the round trip from England, for if they quit at New York they forfeit the pay already earned. And another: at Liverpool 22,000 dock laborers report at the gates alongshore every day seeking a job; and on the average only 15,000 find employment. The "surplus" 7000 indicate the possible state of unemployment in the maritime labor of Great Britain. The Liverpool dockers have a fairly well organized union, with its own bureau, impartially and in rotation assigning men to the work. It has a system of paying benefits in cases of sickness and death; it has a voice in fixing the wage scale for the men—a better scale than that obtained some years ago, low as it is to-day. But with the men on ship-board it must be admitted the union sentiment at present is not strong.

As one looks at that part of the steerage to which the immigrants into the United States from the east of Europe are packed, he asks himself whether the government regulations which are applicable are yet

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

up to a civilized standard. To stow away for the night perhaps one hundred men (or, in another compartment, women) in a low-ceiled space, on layers of iron berths, apart only far enough to admit of crowding one's way along, is stabling them under worse conditions than cattle are ordinarily kept. The English-speaking third-class passengers have cabins of two, four, eight berths of bare boards, it is true, but in possible cleanliness and decency they are in great contrast with the dormitories, or rather pens, in which are confined the Italians, Magyars, and Russian Jews.

In these observations, obviously, I cast no especial reflection upon the White Star Line. On the contrary, I am prepared to hear that its treatment of stewards and steerage passengers is even better than the average. I but speak of facts that have passed under my own observation, with some mention of the views relevant to them natural to one who hopes and expects better things for labor.

One of my fellow-passengers on the *Baltic*, a gentleman who is thoroughly conversant with the marketing of men's hats, mentioned to me a recent development in that trade very significant to the people of the United States, and particularly to the hatters and hat-manufacturers who have been engaged for the past five months in an industrial struggle. He informed me that within the last six months the importation of English-made hats has increased by a large percentage, and that there has been a great increase in the use of caps. He reasoned from

## UNDERWORLD OF AN OCEAN STEAMER

this that a large number of American working-men have been avoiding the purchase of non-union hats as an easy way of solving the situation with which they were confronted. He said, further: "Suppose, now that the hitherto wearer of derby hats should learn the advantages of the cap! It has some decided ones. It is far more easily adjustable to the head than a stiff-rimmed hat. It does not blow off so easily. It lets the wearer lean back against a wall or the back of a car seat. It is not so ready to be knocked off the head. It does not show a dent, and is not so easily soiled. Moreover, it is cheaper. In winter it is warmer, and can be provided with flaps. It may be that the cap, as the result of the dearth of hats, will become the fashion in America with many classes of people, as it is in the British Isles. It sometimes takes very little pushing one way or another to make or unmake a fashion." If a million or two of organized working-men should start buying caps, the cap-manufacturers would soon put the finest in form and material on the market. The result would be a virtual as well as an entirely victorious boycott on hats. Hatters now on strike can turn to making caps, but the manufacturers' combine would fare badly. Less causes than their lockout have had just as great effect on the fortunes of industries or possible disaster to them. The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor could become cap-wearers without being in danger of prison as boycotters.

My arrival in Liverpool being on Sunday afforded me an opportunity of seeing numbers of gatherings of

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

men in the public squares—meetings of a religious or reformatory character as well as for the discussion of grievances. Some other time I may report the specific characteristics of these meetings, but for the present I merely report the fact that a deep degree of poverty was written upon many faces in the throngs which I saw. Men with whom I discussed this matter, and whose statements no doubt were authentic, informed me that a large proportion of the workers are in a chronic state of unemployment—that poverty and misery are everywhere in England, and that the reason for wan faces, tattered clothing, and unshod feet, even on the Sabbath, is to be found in the number of the constantly unemployed.

In Liverpool there is a district which has developed into a full-fledged Chinatown. It covers quite an area, but not so large as that in New York or San Francisco. Nor, so far as I have been able to learn, are there subterranean habitations. That would not be permitted here. ~~X~~But one feature of Chinese life in Liverpool I have not observed in the United States. That is, it is quite common in Liverpool for Chinamen either to marry or live in concubinage with white women; and on the streets one can frequently see white women carrying their half-caste Chinese offspring in their arms, or almond-eyed tots clinging to the skirts of their white mothers. About twenty years ago the first Chinese came into the life of the people of Liverpool, apparently unnoticed. Others followed, until there are fully two thousand here. They lured young girls into their

## UNDERWORLD OF AN OCEAN STEAMER

dens, to become finally their victims. In Liverpool's Chinatown one can see boys and girls from ten to sixteen years of age listlessly walking the streets without the slightest indication of the Caucasian in their mother, and with the fully developed facial characteristics of their Mongolian fathers. The amalgamation has resulted in the elimination of the white without even the maintenance of the best that may be in the character of the Chinese. Already the Chinese question, together with the half-breed feature, is arousing the thought and concern of a large number of the people of Liverpool.

## ENGLISH LABOR—IN PARLIAMENT, FACTORY, AND SLUM

LONDON, Tuesday, *July* 6, 1909.

IN mentally reviewing my travels of the ten days just passed, I have the sensation of one who has been looking at moving pictures. After a Sunday and part of Monday in Liverpool, I crossed the Irish Channel and reached Dublin in the afternoon; on Wednesday I recrossed to Holyhead and visited Chester; I spent Thursday and Friday at Blackpool, and Saturday I went early to Manchester, and on to London in the evening. In my journeyings I have met old friends and made new ones, heard many speeches and made a few myself, caught suggestive glimpses of the difference between the English and American labor organizations and methods, and have had before me every hour the evidence of a social situation, atmosphere, and conflict that is an ocean apart from what one sees in America. But in what I have to write to-day I shall not attempt to go profoundly into social questions. My remarks will take rather the form of moving pictures.

Let me set it down as a solemn fact that what is regarded as a well-worn bit of humor when related in connection with enterprising American journalism has become literary true. I met in Liverpool several

## ENGLISH LABOR

British "pressmen" (reporters). I descended the gang-plank from the *Baltic*. Before I could even reach the baggage-room for the inspection of the Custom-House officials, one of them, a very smooth and apparently shy young Englishman, had me by the elbow, saying: "Mr. Gompers, I have been directed by my editor to ask you regarding your impressions of England—to know whether the people of the States or of England have made the greater progress." He stuck to me as long as his idea of good breeding permitted, propounding equally original inquiries all the time; and although polite he seemed rather unsatisfied when I asked for time to learn something of the subject upon which he was seeking information.

I shall not pretend that I performed any deep social investigations in Liverpool. One might probably take up months in delving into the records and results of the various movements intended to put flesh upon the bones of Liverpool's poor, whole clothes on their bodies, sound brains in their craniums, and hope in their hearts. I was told that drunkenness had declined, that with improved organization among the workers along the water-front wages and conditions are not so bad as they were some years ago; that the general scheme of municipal improvement, though costly, has had some good results for the working-class in houses, education, and hygiene. It was clear that the streets were well paved and clean; it could be heard on all sides and read in the local press that the deprived classes were voicing their cry

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

against injustice and in favor of the various projects for the social uplift.

Minor incidents at times are strong in suggestion. I was taken with a party by the reception committee to a very modest roadside house about eight miles from the city, where tea was served. When ready, a young man in a bicycle suit opened the door of the sitting-room and called to us, "Comrades, tea is ready," receiving applause for his democratic joke at thus dubbing several members of Parliament who were with us. The "tea," which was made up of bread baked in the solid English style, excellent butter, biscuits, sandwiches, and marmalade, was in all respects as good as any hotel could serve; but the price was only eighteen cents per person. "This is our Socialistic co-operation," said one of our hosts; and he went on to relate that his comrades and fellow-propagandists from Liverpool, Chester, and other towns as far away as Manchester are wont to gather at this club-house, which they jointly operate, and tell one another precious things relating to their cause. He pointed to the portraits of Socialist leaders on the wall, and notices of meetings and other events on the bulletin-board. Continuing, he said: "We have here a presage of the future. No capitalistic exploiters are growing rich on our patronage. A man or a woman can come here for a week-end—that is, from Saturday evening, and stay until Sunday evening—getting a bed and four meals for less than a dollar." The earnest members of this club believe they are thus promoting Socialism, little realizing that the



## ENGLISH LABOR

club scheme is entirely voluntary, while a Socialist State would be absolutely compulsory. As we came away, I looked at the red flag floating from a high pole in the grounds, and said: "Your co-operative club-house is a good example of the Socialism I will join with you in promoting."

But another minor incident in which I had a part occurred in Dublin, and elicited a different phase of Socialist methods. A reception was given to me in the Trades Council Hall, in Capel Street, by the Parliamentary Committee of the Irish Trades Union Congress and the leading members of the Dublin Trades Council. The spirit of cordiality was all that could be desired; but the speeches, apart from the personal aspect, sounded on the whole a minor or pessimistic note. One speaker mentioned the deplorable decrease of the Irish population; another referred to the accepted fact that Irishmen, when gathering together, "do not always see eye to eye with each other"; and a third deplored the slow progress of the labor movement in Ireland as compared with other countries. Much of the distress in Ireland, I am told, is caused by farmers and landowners departing from agriculture to cattle-raising, numbers of workers being rendered superfluous by the transition. Fully forty thousand of Ireland's people leave her shores annually; and the census, as well as the apparent workless worker, tell the same tale. Having been toasted most cordially—a compliment in which nearly all the company participated by making brief speeches—I was called upon to respond. After my address a general

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

discussion ensued, when a young man, the youngest in the company, with impassioned gesture and fiery words, "rebuked" all his hearers. He declared that he was a Socialist, and added: "Only Socialists understand the root evil of the labor problem or possess an effective remedy." The occasion caused me to be less agreeable in my reply to him in the presence of an audience than I had been with our road-house Socialist friend in Liverpool. I undertook to strive seriously to teach him something of sound thought and good manners, much to the delight of nine-tenths of the assembled guests.

At Blackpool I attended the tenth annual congress of the General Federation of Trade Unions. The duties performed by the American Federation of Labor, as representative of our affiliated trade unions, require in Great Britain three national bodies made up of associated unions—*viz.*, the British Trade Union Congress with its permanent Parliamentary Committee, the Parliamentary Labor Party, and the General Federation of Trade Unions. The history of these bodies, the personality of their leaders, and the development at the different periods of the need of their respective operations, might make plain their separate existence and administrations; but I am not prepared to enter too deeply upon the subject here.

The main object of the General Federation of Trades is to give systematic financial backing to its constituent unions during trade disputes. An annual per-capita tax is paid into the treasury of each union affiliated; and in case of unemployment due

## ENGLISH LABOR

to a controversy with employers a weekly benefit in addition to that of the particular union involved is paid. The Federation was formed in 1898, with 43 societies or unions having 343,000 members; and it has now 131 societies with a membership of 693,998. The treasury was increased every year until the last by an average of \$50,000 annually. The reserve fund at the beginning of 1908 was over \$800,000. The stoppage in the cotton trade last year brought unemployment to 45,000 members; and this, with many lesser disputes, caused an outlay from the treasury of something over \$600,000. In all, from March 1, 1908, to March 1, 1909, the Federation dealt with 638 disputes, involving 54,962 persons. The treasury now contains \$370,000.

The "agenda" or program of the meeting comprised little more than matters of routine. Except for the democratic idea of having every affiliated union satisfying its members by being represented, an auditor and executive committee might perhaps have attended to all the essential business that was done. Some significance, however, lay in the speeches. The chairman spoke of there having been not one suspension of work (strike) in the previous year that was caused by the demand of a union. All the disputes originated in orders by employers for reductions in wages or through similar aggressions on labor. This statement brought up in my mind a line of inquiry which I intend pursuing fully before reaching some of the conclusions which it suggests. Why should not the workers, particularly the or-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

ganized workers in trade unions, ask for more, especially when wages are so low as they are in Great Britain? Surely, the workers will not become larger sharers in the product of their toil unless they make some effort toward its attainment.

Neither of the two questions before the congress which caused any considerable discussion had any bearing on union topics as we understand them in the United States. One of them, relating to the acceptance in trade unions of soldiers trained to trades while in the service, sought to induce the Federation to memorialize the War Office, the Prime Minister, and the President of the Board of Trade in relation to trade instruction in the army. This proposition, however, was negatived. The other question, which was of a much more important character, will come up for serious consideration at the Trade Union Congress at Ipswich in September. It relates to national insurance against unemployment, the administration of which will necessitate considerable expenditure, and will create, as some have facetiously stated, many new office-holders. The outcome of the debates at the meeting is stated in these words by the *Manchester Guardian*: "It may be taken that the Labor members of Parliament will continue to look with sympathy on the Government's intentions while at the same time reserving to themselves the right of criticism in detail." And the same newspaper adds: "More especially would it be urged that the trade unions should supply a definite proportion of the representatives to be appointed." The op-

## ENGLISH LABOR

ponents of the scheme in the Federation advanced the argument that certain of its supporters were attracted to it because of the possible benefit to themselves as such appointees. It was also pointed out that union members would, under the bill that has been prepared, suffer under the disadvantage of paying weekly dues to both the union for the out-of-work benefits paid by the union, and to the administrators of the Government's insurance against unemployment. In such case the union dues might cease, to the injury of the unions. Further, the fate of the union-insured workmen out of work because of a strike or a lockout would present a difficult problem; and their refusal to apply for work with non-unionists might render it difficult for them to procure any benefit at all.

Blackpool, as the seaside resort of the factory population of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Warwickshire, presents interesting features. The place, which has a permanent population of sixty thousand, is visited by three million holiday-seekers annually, chiefly from June to September. All its building and street construction work is substantial. The houses are of brick; the streets are paved with asphalt; the esplanade, which varies from one hundred to two hundred feet in width, runs four and a half miles along the shore on a bluff thirty to fifty feet higher than the beach. Promenaders, often in great crowds, are to be seen on it at all hours until after midnight. In the evening the street scenes are brilliant with electric light. A steel "Eiffel tower," five hundred

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

feet high; half a dozen theatres; a "winter garden," with all its Luna Park attractions under glass roofs; several roller-skating rinks and dancing-halls; a shoot-the-chute, a scenic railway, and similar attractions, indicate the methods by which the wage earners get rid of their appropriations for the outing. It is the custom for the "hands" of the mills in the textile industry to contribute a small sum weekly to a common fund for the "wakes," as they call their vacation session.

Several peculiarities in the Blackpool crowds were striking. As compared with our Coney Island crowds, they were quiet, slow, unanimated. Perhaps seventy or eighty per cent. were young people—very young people. Boys from sixteen to twenty years of age were paired off walking with girls still younger. This was quite general. Collectively, they were the smallest people in stature I have ever seen in an English-speaking community. Not only was the average height hardly more than five feet; but narrow, bony shoulders, span-width chests, and spindle legs were the rule. A London newspaper man, who walked about with me, and who was making his first visit to Blackpool, was as much struck as I was with the diminutive size of the promenaders. "Nothing like it, even in London, so indicative of physical degeneracy," he remarked. "How flat-chested these girls are; what a slovenly gait the boys have! I venture they don't weigh one hundred pounds apiece!" Some of the young men who were in volunteer khaki were decidedly lacking in smartness. They might have

## ENGLISH LABOR

been wearing the cast-off uniforms of boys of the military academies of the grammar-school grade.

What is the explanation of this stunting of a portion of the English race? One of the little fellows himself made this explanation to me: "The sins of the father are visited on the child. Before the days of the protective factory laws, children were put to work in the mills at eight years of age—yes, even at six—and they were compelled to work twelve hours a day. In manhood they begat these youngsters, who themselves often go to work too young."

One seldom sees a "square dance" or quadrille here. Round dancing is the favorite amusement of these factory folks. Another highly popular pastime with them is sitting after dark on the esplanade benches, not to view the ocean, but, in the words of one of the amused observers, "to cuddle and kiss." It would be interesting to get medical testimony in respect to this habit as well as round dancing; for the round dancers turn all one way, very few reversing.

In Manchester I visited the vast warehouses of the Wholesale Co-operative Society. I shall not tire the reader's patience with the long statistical statements necessary to impress on him the truth as to the present status of the society, if he would but read them all. In the last fifteen years the increase in the business transacted has been marvellous, the volume in the past year exceeding \$160,000,000. "Hundreds of new societies were formed, embracing hundreds of thousands of new members and tens of thousands of additional employes." So runs the

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

story. It is fourteen years since I last visited Manchester. I was greatly impressed with the development of this democratic industrial and commercial concern. I again satisfied myself that the trade unionists in several of the largest industrial regions of Great Britain are staunch supporters of the co-operative movement. In the existence of a Joint Council of Trade Unionists and Co-operatives, peace between the two great economic working-class movements is promoted. There are no millionaires in the co-operative business so impressively represented in the Manchester headquarters; no rare geniuses as paragons of success; no "captains of industry," and yet it is one of the greatest business institutions in the world.

One of the statements made to me by an active man in the affairs of Manchester, which greatly impressed me, was to the effect that the school trustees, through the teachers, present to any pupil, boy or girl, a free plant, the only condition being a promise to care for it, to nurture it, and that this has a good influence upon the minds and conduct of the children.

On the train from Manchester to London I fell into conversation with a young college man from New Zealand, where he had lived all his life; but after some years' experience as a civil engineer he was taking a post-graduate course in England. I put to him the usual queries as to New Zealand's social experiments. From his replies, the nature of the questions may be easily inferred. They were as follows: "All classes are satisfied with the land policy of the



## ENGLISH LABOR

country—the breaking up of the immense estates, through compensation to the owners, with the loan system to the settlers, keeps access to the land continually open; and consequently there is little poverty in the country. The exclusion of pauper immigrants and alien races is generally satisfactory. The Government railroad system, comprising only two thousand miles, is less economically and efficiently managed than it would be in private hands. I know of one case in which a line of eighty miles had been profitable to a company, and satisfactory to the public, but which, since taken over by the Government, has ceased to pay; and the service at the same time is less satisfactory than formerly. The bookkeeping in connection with public enterprises is difficult, as outlays are sometimes not charged up to the undertaking, but to the public treasury. As to compulsory arbitration in trade disputes between employers and the employed, it is now unpopular both with the employers and the workers.” He cited the now well-known cases of the boot and shoe manufacturers who closed their factories rather than obey the findings against them of the Government arbitrators, and the case of the butcher workmen who were fined or went to jail rather than work on terms which they deemed unjust. In other words, the outcome to the present time of compulsory arbitration in “the country without strikes” has been injurious to the business of the employers and destructive of the liberty of the wage-workers. I necessarily only repeat the summary of the views of this native of New Zealand of English

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

stock for what it may be worth, as a sort of sign-board to the reservoirs of further information; but it coincides with the results of the recent observations of the thinkers and doers in the industrial field of the United States.

On Sunday I went to Hyde Park, London, not to view the famous "church parade," in which the unworldly worshipers walk about on their way home from service to look at one another's fine prayer-books, but to hear something of what the open-air orators were saying in this land of free speech. From the snatches of the "rostrum" talk that I heard while standing on the outer fringe of several groups, I took it that the standing topics of social reform were being resifted for the listeners by most of the speakers. While it may be that in the eyes of the great English public men these gatherings are hardly to be regarded as of much importance, the English spirit must be admired which tolerates, even promotes, them, as well as the spirit in which the participants join in them. The speaking proceeds in seriousness and a reasonableness of tone. Any one may put questions to the orators. Many a thing that a writer might assert without contradiction cannot be uttered by a speaker without being instantly caught up. Besides, a large number of persons who have not ready access to libraries may get in the "academies" of the park an education in current subjects; and also there are the vivifying open air and one's sense of certainty or of suspicion regarding the statements of the speakers confirmed by the manifestations of

## ENGLISH LABOR

the crowd. The custom of Sunday and every-day street and park meetings is common in England. I am informed that sometimes most excellent speeches are made. Those that I heard, however, were rather of a drowsy order. The police on duty always exert their authority to maintain the right of the speaker to be heard without molestation.

The suffragettes furnished one of the topics for the speeches. Whatever the merits of their case, I heard men who were usually friendly to them say that the methods they are pursuing are injurious to their cause. Weakness pretending to assault strength violently, they say, becomes absurd; and it is pointed out that certain forms of advertising react upon those who seek publicity, because they show what should not be shown. Yet, despite the adverse criticism of nearly all the people toward the manner in which the suffragettes conduct themselves, it cannot be gainsaid that the cause of woman suffrage co-equal with that of man is gaining ground in Great Britain.

On Sunday morning I visited the house in which I was born, No. 2 Fort Street, Spitalfields, London. I passed through neighborhoods almost every house of which I knew more than half a century ago, when a lad of eight. I was in my twelfth year when my father took his family to the United States. Cheap-side, Cornhill, Commercial Street, Houndsditch, Bishopsgate Street—these all looked much the same as they did in the long ago. I made my way to our own old street and stood before the house in which I was born. I had revisited the spot fourteen years ago,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

for the first time since my boyhood; and I was then subject to those peculiar sentiments, both pleasing and depressing, with which one is seized when beholding with mature vision what was familiar to the unknowing eyes of childhood and dimmed to the transforming memory of later years.

Somehow, the blunt and hard facts, in the light of comparisons, brought disillusionment. The great things to the boy are every-day matters to the man. Yet this was the scene of the struggles of my father and the loving care of my mother. Home was once there. We were happy, that big family of ours, in our childhood, hard-working though we were. Kindly people now live in the house. Its "bread-winners" have "gone to Chicago," the rest hoping to follow soon.

Perhaps one reason for the absence of the fulness of that tender and somewhat mournful sentiment that comes to one in contemplation of his birth-place lay in the fact that with me were my wife and daughter, and also my very excellent cousin, the favorite theatrical comedian, in our own country as well as here, Sam Collins. Sam has the happy habit of seeing all life in a joyous mood. He was born in that same house in Fort Street; and his sole idea, on now seeing it again, was to rejoice heartily over his birth and to bring us others present to laugh and make merry with him. Well, why not? Turn down the leaf in the book that brings brooding or heartpain, or any other kind of unhappiness. Open at the leaf that brings smiles, hope, pleasant faces, good hearts, and full life to humanity.

## A WEEK IN LONDON

PARIS, *July 13, 1909.*

ANOTHER busy week have I passed on my vacation. It hardly occurred to me during my stay in London that I might do something at sight-seeing, as I had engagements at almost every waking hour with men in the thick of the Trade Union and other social movements. The newspaper boys found that I could give them midnight interviews; consequently they kept me up several nights until the small hours promised dawn, describing Trade Union methods in the American Federation of Labor. Sunday, our party left London for Paris. I stopped over a day at Calais. There and here in Paris our French friends, lively, cheerful, generous, and intelligent, have overwhelmed me with kindly attentions.

Certainly, it is a curious spectacle—that annual Fourth of July reception at Ambassador Whitelaw Reid's mansion in London. This year on Monday, the fifth, the occasion brought together a crowd of the most elegantly attired people I ever saw. At least four-fifths of the callers were American women. The scarcity of men, as well as the fact that nearly all of them were Londonized in dress—"top" hat and black frock-coat, and the rest of it—suggested

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

the thought that "pa" has about enough cash this year to send "ma" and the girls abroad; but he himself is staying in America to watch the markets. It was a restless, gay, chatty assemblage; its individual members quite uniformly knowing how to pose to advantage for the general admiration. Everybody arrived on "wheels" at the palatial mansion; a line of knee-breeched men servants indicated the way through the pillared vestibule and court and up the broad marble staircase; at an upper landing, broad and deep, stood the tired Ambassador and Mrs. Reid shaking hands with each caller as his or her name was audibly announced by an attendant. Beyond were halls with polished floors; the walls hung with rare paintings; the ceilings marvels of gilt and moulding. Thence, after a dress-parade, the endless lines of people descended to the conservatories and the large marquise on the lawn, to partake of as good a collation as the season and the court caterer could supply. The attendance numbered several thousands. Dorchester House, as Ambassador Reid's residence in Hyde Park is called, is one of the show-places in London. It is said his rent for it is \$55,000 a year, more than three times the salary paid him annually by the Government of the United States. What a variety of sentiments—admiration, envy, vanity, shyness, flippancy, philosophy—must have animated the multitude there forgathered! Mr. Reid has mounted the ladder high, but I dare say that when he dreams that he is again the country - newspaper reporter of fifty years ago

## A WEEK IN LONDON

he is just as happy as in his present waking hours.

On the second of July, when the meeting of unemployed men was being held in George Square, Glasgow, about a hundred and fifty of them, leaving the body of those in attendance, tried to "rush" the entrance to the Municipal Buildings, where the special Distress Committee were in a wrangle over the situation. "At one time," says a dispatch, "it appeared that a serious riot was imminent, groups of unemployed gathering around the various doors and clamoring for admittance." Checked in their rush (by the police), they massed themselves on the staircase, and stirring scenes ensued. One orator in the square declared to the crowd that they were "curs if they allowed their wives and children to starve." Far from Fourth of July enthusiasm was the sentiment of that mass of hungry human beings. The spectacle, or even its description, would be enough, one might believe, to move every man coming to know of it to study why it is that society to-day sees so sad a disparity in the distribution of wealth, and to do his share toward its elimination.

Nothing that has occurred in England during my stay has so much stirred me up as the fact that "batches" of miners in Durham County, in the north of England, were taken to prison in default of paying fines in various sums for having been absent from work for one day—April 12. One item in the newspaper ran thus: "Thirty miners were yesterday taken to jail and were accompanied to the train by hun-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

dreds of the villagers. Later on, the miners who went to jail last Friday arrived home after their imprisonment for the same offence, and were received with enthusiasm. There are still forty miners to go to jail." It appears that there is a special act of Parliament forbidding workmen to quit their employment even for a day without due legal notice to their employers, which may be construed by the employer as an intention to leave his service. The miners of Durham certainly come under that law, and strongly wishing a day off took it despite orders to the contrary. Consequently they are being punished for breach of contract. Are the business, the employing classes ever jailed for such a "crime"? To me it seems that a gross discrimination exists in such cases against labor. A very capable and prominent labor man assured me that he has never known of an instance of this character in his own trade. I had made the inquiry in the presence of a number of active, studious labor men, officials of labor organizations, who testified differently as to the men in their own unions as well as to others. They mentioned cases in which men were fined and imprisoned in brass-working, railroading, gas-making, and several other trades, for absenting themselves from work for even half a day. Undoubtedly, an inquiry will yet be made by the trade unionists whether their rights under the British Constitution will permit imprisonment for failure to fulfil the specific terms of a contract for personal service. When contracts exist between business men, and the party contracting



## A WEEK IN LONDON

to perform certain services fails to fulfil the terms of the contract, he may be sued for damages. If he cannot respond to civil damages because of poverty, the injured party cannot compel the specific performance of the terms of the contract for that service. The same contention ought to apply to the employer and the employed.

In connection with this, a case just ended in the courts is to be noted, in which the British Trades Dispute Act of 1906 has not worked out as expected. An agent of the Musicians' Union at Bristol, after the union had withdrawn its members from the orchestra of a local theatre in a strike, circulated a handbill asking the public to patronize another theatre which employed union men. In the suit brought by the "unpatronized" theatrical manager, he obtained judgments for \$17,500 against, not the Musicians' Union, but the member who issued the handbill. The judge in his decree expressed views strangely at variance with those entertained not only by trade unionists, but by all who had any connection with the enactment of that law of 1906. He maintained that when the manager of the theatre succeeded in hiring a sufficient number of musicians to satisfy his avowed needs to replace the men who struck, there no longer existed any dispute between him and the union. While in America it has been decided that the express refusal of union men to patronize any employer of non-union labor is not illegal, but that the coercion of a "third party" is the feature necessary to establish a boycott liable to damages, this judge in

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

England gave damages for "injury to the plaintiff's business." With these decrees as precedents the question arises: Are the "disputes" under the Act legal still to leave the union treasuries liable to damage-suits if the union takes up the conflict between an employer and his own employes? In other words, is the law to be so interpreted that a union cannot have a "dispute" with an employer when he is running his establishment with non-unionists? Cannot trade unionists, workmen, appeal to the public to decline to patronize an unfair employer?

On Wednesday I visited the "House of Call" at the building of the London Society of Compositors and addressed several hundreds of its unemployed members. I did what I could to inspire those present with hope and determination, but really in this country, where one sees so much enforced idleness and distress, the words of encouragement that we are wont to utter with truth at home are arrested on our lips. The London printers' organization has all the praiseworthy features that characterize the best of trade unions. Last year the unemployed benefits amounted to \$115,000 with 2,655 recipients; besides \$47,000 was paid to 474 superannuated members. In 198 cases of death, \$13,500 was given to the next of kin. The total number of members in this local union is 12,202; the society's freehold building in St. Bride's Street is valued at \$77,000. Secretary T. E. Naylor told me that last year the expected annual fluctuation in membership and means proved the great stability of the society. He said: "When the industrial history of

## A WEEK IN LONDON

the year comes to be written, 1908 will be ranked as one of the worst ever experienced in this country, not only in the printing trade, but in all industries and occupations. We have been visited by a trade depression the like of which has not been witnessed for many years, bringing in its train the usual dearth of employment and its accompanying distress. In such circumstances it is not surprising that the London Society of Compositors, in common with almost every other trade union, should suffer some diminution of its prosperity." During the present year, however, business has picked up. The amalgamation of the London Society, the Provincial and the Scottish Typographical Unions is an event quite certain now. But the Dublin and other Irish Typographical Unions, said Secretary Naylor, "will not join."

A few squares from the society's headquarters is the fine establishment of the London branch of the Co-operative Printing Society; other branches being in Manchester and Newcastle. Building and plant are owned by the society. When during a visit to it our party reached the composing-room on the fifth story we were greeted by that peculiar rattle and bang of composing-sticks rapped against the type cases which to compositors I am told is the substitute for hand-clapping and other forms of applause. Since silence is the strict rule in all well-conducted printeries, this explosive and long-sustained and almost deafening sound of iron beaten upon sounding wood is startling. I was called upon to address the men. Though I responded in words, I did it briefly,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

remembering that every minute's suspension of the click, click of typesetting meant a loss of pounds, shillings, and pence to the men and the co-operation. The 175 employes of this office have a forty-eight-hour week, whereas the general union scale calls for fifty-two or fifty-four a week. Union wages provide a minimum of 39 shillings per week (\$9.75); the entire force of the co-operatives receive higher amounts. In ownership and operation the English system of co-operation is followed; that is, the stock is held by trade unions, co-operative and other societies, and excellence of output is aimed at rather than dividends, while profits are shared with the employes. The society has had a steadily progressive success since its first year. Its dividend of trade has averaged above \$8,000 for the last ten years.

Another union whose headquarters I visited was in the far East End, the Dockers and General Labor Union, of which Ben Tillet has been general secretary twenty years. The organization grew out of the dockers' strike of England nearly a quarter of a century ago. At the time of my visit the Executive Board and the business agents from the entire country were in session, and about thirty of them awaited to greet me. The cordiality of their welcome was only surpassed in their shouts for American trade unionism and the American people. The lot of the dock workers is not to-day by far what it was before the union was organized. The union statistics just issued show that its benefit features are highly appreciated by the members. Hours of labor have been decreased, wages

## A WEEK IN LONDON

increased, and, comparatively speaking, their social life has been much improved. Eighty-two members of the Dockers and General Labor Union are Borough Councilmen and Justices of the Peace. The expression of the board members with regard to Ben Tillet indicated a deep feeling of respect for his valued services and showed his popularity after long years of service. Hale and hearty "Jim" Wignalls is also a member of the Executive Board. Both Wignalls and Tillet have been fraternal delegates from the British Trade Union Congress to conventions of the American Federation of Labor.

On Thursday I visited the headquarters of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and there saw the Executive Board of that great organization of machinists. Many subjects were discussed affecting the interests of the workers, particularly the relations between the machinists of America and Great Britain and other countries. Owing to the awful state of unemployment even among the members of this highly skilled trade, the organization had lost several thousand members during the past year. The institution and the membership, as well as its financial standing, are, however, unimpaired.

Later in the afternoon I visited the headquarters of the Parliamentary Committee of the British Trade Union Congress. This committee is about on a par with the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. The subjects of strikes, lockouts, and boycotts were discussed and the inevitable question asked me what would be the outcome of the decision

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

and sentence imposed upon Frank Morrison, John Mitchell, and me by Judge Wright, of the Court of the District of Columbia. It is quite evident that the feeling of indignation at that decision and sentence is as keen on this side of the Atlantic as it is on our own. It takes not a little of my time to try to explain the grounds, or rather the phantasy, upon which Judge Wright based his conclusions, decision, and sentence.

The most interesting spot in London just at present to a touring American trade unionist is the House of Commons. I made several visits to it, a dinner being given me in one of its restaurant halls one evening by the Labor Party members of the House and on another evening by the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress. On the first of these occasions, thirty-odd M. P.'s were present. All these members no doubt had subscribed to the immediate Labor program, but the diversity of their views and sentiments regarding present activities, as well as the future ideal commonwealth, was not concealed. I was given the opportunity to describe our American Federation of Labor, and to tell why it is and what it is. The men before me were not of a character to wish me to mince my words. What the truth of the matter required me to say may not have been to the liking of some of them, but they were all prepared to take my utterances in good part. In fact, the dinner proved to be, not a mere convivial function, but the means of bringing about on the part of my hosts a better understanding of the spirit and

## A WEEK IN LONDON

methods of the trade unionists of the United States and Canada, who are doing in their own way the best possible work for their own members and their own countries. I am not prepared at this stage to set down definite opinions as to the British Trade Union politics. I wish to pursue my inquiry further, but I have positive views regarding the necessity of the present policies of American trade unionism, and it will require something more than what I have yet seen or learned here or at home to warrant a change of front. It seemed to me that the moment was at hand at that dinner to state clearly, fully, definitely, and as concisely as possible, the history, struggles, and policy of the American trade union movement.

At the Parliamentary Trade Union Congress dinner, two evenings afterward, all but five men present had been fraternal delegates at American labor conventions. Naturally the event was largely social in character. The enthusiasm over America of those who had attended our conventions exhibited itself in hearty words of greeting, with many expressions of good-will for the delegates they had met in various cities of our country.

One incident of the evening seemed to be an echo of what had been called forth at the dinner two nights before. It was the speech delivered by the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, David J. Shackleton. He brought up one illustration after another of the un-wisdom of those extremists among social reformers, both in and outside of the ranks of the wage-earning masses, who continually call for legislation as a sub-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

stitute for trade union action. For example, the previous week had seen an attempt by the coal-mine owners in South Wales to take every advantage of the eight-hour Act on its going into effect July 1. Claiming that the law itself set aside all existing agreements between the unions and themselves, they tried to enforce new rules preliminary to a reduction of wages. The men threatened a strike and the claim was dropped. As the Act says that "the eight hours per day may be extended," on not more than sixty days in any calendar year by not more than one hour a day, "the employers decided that on one day every week the men should work nine hours instead of eight." This clause, the men argued, was optional to both parties, and as they had a strong union, well prepared to sustain their claim, both sides concluded to leave the matter to the Court of Conciliation for settlement. Next the employers made a demand for a second shift of eight hours in every twenty-four. This also the men opposed; night-work was an unnecessary burden upon the men; the gaseous nature of South Wales coal-mines does not permit a mine to be operated in safety sixteen hours daily; the machinery for mining, safety, and ventilation would be overtaxed, increasing the dangers to life. For a week the conferences between the representatives of the miners and employers continued, and the attitude of the miners gave the newspapers of Great Britain an opportunity to ascertain the difference between enforcing a law according to the interpretation of employers and operating it in its real intent in the in-



## A WEEK IN LONDON

terests of the workers. The miners were determined not to surrender their right to control their own labor—and won.

As a spectator in the House of Commons I spent an hour one evening listening to the debates. I was given a seat on that little bench for eight persons “under the gallery,” where a select few constituents are at times permitted to whisper to members during the progress of the debates on bills in which they are especially interested. The oak-panelled hall, as we have so often read, is the reverse of spacious, without desks, and with two long sets of uncomfortable benches running lengthwise and mounting upward from an open quadrangular area in the middle. To get the 670 members into the 476 narrow seats being quite impossible, the overflow on field-days must take to the galleries. As I saw it, the force operating the law-making mill was about 350, the opposition and the Government facing each other on opposite rows of benches, except that the Labor and the Irish members were seated on the same side with the opposition. On the first of the lower benches are the heads of departments seated in line, looking squarely into the eyes of the prominent members of the party who want their places. As the discussions are carried on mainly by these two platoons, the scene is at times gladiatorial. Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. Balfour were tossing repartees and compliments from time to time during the proceedings which I witnessed. The famed House of Commons “manner of speech” was so closely adhered to that individuality in addressing the House

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

was hardly discernible. This, I was told, was especially the case as the body was in committee. I enjoyed the acting with a lively appreciation. The accepted code of mannerisms for a speaker in this gentlemen's debating club begins with an apologetic demeanor on the member arising; then come a propitiatory smile and a hesitating utterance. As he proceeds, his voice in thin conversational tone, the speaker frequently stammers "I, I, I," or "ah, ah, ah," meant to be expressive of a brain working profoundly but diffidently and modestly. As if, however, mocking at his own possible seriousness, a vein of flippancy runs through the honorable member's remarks. I am told that any display of feeling, a ring in the tones, a change from deep to high voice, would be deemed out of place; to the listening members belonging the right of showing approval or disagreement. Those who side with the speaker sometimes loudly say "Hear! Hear!"—rising inflection—while his opponents derisively utter "Oh! Oh!"—falling inflection. Wavelets of these expressions, which occasionally swelled to waves, accompanied every address I heard, however brief. A feature of the session not to be overlooked was that far toward the ceiling, in the squeeze of a small gallery behind a lattice-work, sat a few women, the wives of members. Since the suffragette "invasion" of the House of Commons, women who are not related to members are not admitted to the House.

The bill under discussion was the one that sent the hosts defending vested rights into shock and shivers

## A WEEK IN LONDON

—that providing for a taxation of land values. I was much interested in listening to the speeches on the subject, as on many a summer and winter evening in America, through the course of the last thirty years, I have heard the subject more than broached by impassioned Single-Taxers. But as the debate on various clauses of the bill proceeded it became apparent that the "confiscation" so feared by opponents of this tax is yet many a long day off. The American system of taxing real estate is hardly begun in England. "Accommodation" land—that lying near built-up districts vacant and untilled—is here not subject to any taxation whatever. The bill proposes one cent annually on every five dollars of its capitalized value. Farm land would pay a small percentage, say perhaps ten or twenty, on its unearned increment, when this has passed fifty per cent beyond its present existing price. Is it anything remarkable that I was occupied in watching the manner of the statesmen present rather than being absorbed in their matter? I who had heard the apostles of taxing the unearned increment one hundred per cent, every bit of it! The bill is no doubt a good beginning for the taxation of the unearned increment of the land, but I was witnessing a play in which the opposition were protesting against being "robbed" of the land their forbears either stole or had bestowed upon them through privilege.

As I passed the several gates to the House of Commons yards I saw standing by them patient, rather woe-begone, but well-dressed women, wearing the sashes of the "Votes for Women" League, and bear-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

ing in their hands scrolls of paper. They were suffragettes, subjects of derision for unfriendly passers-by, objects of fear to the Prime Minister, lions to the sight-seer, and apparently friends to the policemen on guard. Like the policemen, the women go on duty several hours, and then are relieved by others. They hand out handbills describing their unflagging but vain endeavors to get Mr. Asquith to receive their petition. One day they besieged the gates during the session eight hours, another ten hours, another thirteen. They have announced that they will keep up their mute protest during all the time the House of Commons remains in session.

The deepest impression that England made upon me came from its poverty. True, I had not the time to measure up and compare the data of its wealth, its middle-class comfort, its institutions of social helpfulness, but everywhere are thrust before the traveller's eyes scenes of deplorable misery. If one takes a cab in any street in London a panting boy or a man suddenly appears and goes through the form of proffering the unsolicited service of closing or opening the cab door. Frequently there are so many of these men and boys that they hustle with one another to get first in going through the form. Of course I have seen similar plays for pennies in the large cities of the United States, but these have been in front of prominent hotels or restaurants. In England it seems as if there is no place where you may go in which a poor fellow is not immediately upon your heels craving for something. Indeed, if one halts for a moment here to consider his

## A WEEK IN LONDON

way, or stops at a door of a business house to look at its signs before entering, he hears a voice at his side asking for the "job" of giving him information. Subterfuges of all kinds are employed by tattered and hungry-looking men to get a penny without actually putting forth their hands to beg. Some poor fellows follow cabs for miles to earn a sixpence in carrying the travellers' trunks into the boarding-houses. The benches in the parks, on the river embankments, at the little triangles of intersecting streets, have their ragged human derelicts sitting about in lines and groups. In the newspapers and in the average conversation it is not uncommon to see and hear mention of unemployment as an accepted chronic feature in England's industrial and social life. The trade unions pay out large sums annually to their own unemployed. Wage scales seem not to be seriously threatened, as one might think, from the presence of the masses of the very poor, for many of these have been rendered unemployable by their long period of idleness and misery. Physically, thousands have become unfit and are almost irreclaimable from idle habits. Vice and the result of idleness may find them ready victims to death. Poverty is on view in all parts of London; slum back streets border on fashionable thoroughfares; figures in dirt and rags slouch along amid the gay and well-attired promenaders of the parks.

Men who as representatives of organized labor have constantly before them questions of deprivation and idleness have imparted to me their views and con-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

clusions, summarizing verbally the general situation. In brief, I may consequently say that what the stranger sees of the awful exposed destitution of London fairly illustrates what is in the background or entirely concealed from him. Any interpretation of the measures which Parliament and the Councils take up, or which are proposed by social reformers, to be correct, must be governed by this one leading fact in England—its myriads of empty stomachs, ill-clad bodies, and idle though by nature productive human machines. With regret I must confess I came away from London with a sense of depression. From time to time since, those numbers of demoralized, degraded objects which ought to be men and women have formed in my mind's eye a procession moving along together past me, mournful, hopeless, repellent, a disgrace to our boasted civilization.

## FRANCE—ITS MANY PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS

PARIS, *July 17, 1909.*

THE various passing phases of trade unionism in France, as coupled with revolutionary political projects, form a stock theme for writers having all sorts of opinions on the subject, from the dreamer who sees in one or another of the attendant circumstances a promise of the fulfilment of his ideal state, to the cynical newspaper man who gets from the continuous performance of the contesting leaders an endless supply of "copy." There is always something new to chronicle, something fresh to be offered in comment. I cannot, of course, offer in this letter the confident conclusions to which one might arrive after an exhaustive inquiry into the present phase of French trade unionism and politics, but my opportunities during the last week have been unusually good for seeing some of the governing facts in the situation. I have been in touch with the leading characters in the French labor movement, in and out of office, have spoken at an important meeting where representatives of all sides were present and free to ask me questions, and have been interviewed by a swarm of newspaper men who waited at my hotel to make

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

articles out of me, to earn their honest living, and whom in turn I have interviewed.

My short trip in France now over, with many events occurring daily that had some relation with my mission, I feel called upon first to say that the cordiality with which I was treated on all occasions, most gratifying as it was, left me with the feeling that the organized French workmen recognize the significance to themselves of the American labor movement and wish to learn the principles which have been among the causes of our advancement. While in my talks, in public and private, I was called upon to explain our methods, at times to that necessary extent which embodied criticism of the sort of politics that hamper the French labor movement, I was listened to in every instance with attention and respect. There was shown very little of that spirit of wrangling and denunciation that has unfortunately characterized those leaders of Socialism in America who without sound reason pretend to believe that they are promoting the same cause as the Socialists of Europe.

The reader may at once get a point of observation which, whether entirely correct or not, will enable him to survey the situation as a whole if I begin by stating the views of M. René Viviani, Minister of Labor and Member of the French Cabinet, as he gave them to me in an interview on Thursday, the morning after the national celebration of the fall of the Bastille, July 14. His are, of course, the views of the present administration, or, as they say here, Government of France. I was presented to M. Viviani formally in his office



## FRANCE

by M. Charles Barrat, one of the investigators of the department, to whom the usual courtesies to strangers had been extended by me last year at the American Federation of Labor headquarters in Washington.

M. Viviani is an enthusiastic admirer of American trade unionism. After the greetings I asked him what grounds there were for the statements I had frequently heard before and since coming to France, that his Government was opposed to working-class organizations to such an extent that on the occurrence of a strike of any character the authorities might be expected to order the intervention of the army or provide a supply of strike breakers. M. Viviani replied that the charge was baseless. Never had the present Government interfered on any occasion when the strike was between a private employer and his men, except when actual violence had taken place, with attacks upon persons and destruction of property. It was only when Government employes had gone on strike, endangering the public safety, that soldiers were sent to the scene or men hired to take the places of the strikers. "In these cases," said he, "the Nation being the employer, the suspension of an essential public business and the stability of society were threatened. A strike of Government functionaries could not be tolerated. The work of postmen and Government telegraph operators, for example, must go on uninterruptedly if a country is to maintain order, peace, communication from place to place, publicity of current events and those conditions of commerce in which above all other classes the masses of

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

working-men have a vital interest. The present Government, after finding it necessary to put an end to the strike of the postmen and the telegraphers, made its explanation to Parliament and was sustained in its action, and it now promises to continue the policy thus far followed. The malcontents were led by politicians holding extreme, impractical, and inconsistent views. They were trying to mislead the working-classes while often promoting their own political fortunes."

As to the "C. G. T." ("Confédération Generale du Travail," General Federation of Labor), it by no means represented the majority of the organized industrial workers of the country, in M. Viviani's opinion. By an unfair system of voting at its delegate sessions, a comparatively small number of extremists controlled its actions. The large and stable national unions, such as the Typographical, the Metal Workers, the Railroad Men, the Miners, were thus outvoted by delegates representing, in cases, but a few hundred members in a union. The C. G. T. itself represented only about one-third of the union members of France.

"The uninformed readers of certain French daily newspapers," M. Viviani continued, "might be led to believe that the country is in a constant state of protest and disorder arising from the Government's attitude on the labor question. Not so. Much attention is given the disturbers by the sensational press because of politics and not as a result of a real gravity in the situation. France, in general, is at peace industrially. The unions are quietly but persistently pursuing their

## FRANCE

work of organizing and promoting the welfare of their members; the scenes of outbreaks are usually in Paris and occasionally in a few other industrial centres. The Government has been more sympathetic in its efforts on behalf of the working-classes than any of its predecessors. The establishment of this department, now in the third year of its existence, earnestly striving to be of service to labor and to the country, is one of the best proofs of my statements. The Cabinet will continue its present course, depending upon the common sense not only of the French people generally, but of the working-people of France particularly, for support."

M. Viviani really impressed me with his sincerity. I differ with him strongly as to the right of the working-people in any employment, whether private or public, to cease work. The right to cease work distinguishes the free man from the slave, who must work regardless of the conditions imposed upon him by his employer, whether that employer be an individual, a firm, a corporation or the State, but in France, as in many countries, our own included, the pernicious tendency of thought among many employers is to tie the man to his work.

At M. Viviani's mention of the general stable character of the unions in France outside of the few big industrial centers, I recalled my visit to Calais, with its many pleasant features. When, with my little party, I landed there on coming from Dover accompanied by Secretary Appleton of the General Federation of Trades of Great Britain, we were met by a

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

score of delegates of the Lace Makers' Union, which is strong in the northeast of France. In appearance and dress these men were of the very best type of wage workers. Their union, they explained to me, had been modeled on the English system, and they had mainly followed thorough trade-union methods in increasing wages and otherwise improving their conditions as workers. Their wage scale now compares well with that of the English workmen of the same trade. At Caudry, especially, where the industry has grown considerably in recent years, the union has at the same time developed strength. At present employers and employed are both doing well. The Mayor of Calais, who was present, and some of the Councilmen are union members. They have helped in the improvement of the municipality, sufficiently well, in fact, to be re-elected to office. Some of these Councilmen call themselves Socialists, in which case the name does about as much good, or about as much harm, as it does in the case of the voluntary co-operative society of Calais, which also goes by the title of Socialist. In either case, work, beneficial in character, is done for the present day. There have been strikes in Calais at times; but neither unionism nor the public welfare has thereby suffered seriously. On the contrary, unionism abolished grievances and brought about improved conditions. Incidental to such few strikes as have occurred, agitation has been lively and some friction with the police has occurred, but neither unionism nor the public welfare has thereby suffered seriously. France could very well get

## FRANCE

along with such trade unionism as is practised by the lace-makers at Calais and the other practical unions which obtain in many trades.

The morning I reached Paris *Le Matin* contained a letter from L. Niel, who had just resigned as secretary of the "C. G. T." in consequence of a decision by its delegates contrary to his convictions, rendering it obligatory upon himself to quit the office. M. Niel described the "C. G. T." in his letter as ruled by politics. While admitting that he was a Socialist, he denied that he had ever permitted his political opinions to influence his trade unionism. "The Anarchists," he said, now in full power in the central organization, asserted that "their unionism was but Anarchism under another name." "Politics," wrote M. Niel, "has always been a poison to trade unionism." "Never was trade unionism in France so invested with politics as to-day." "In 1906, the C. G. T., at the Congress of Amiens, had solemnly interdicted all unionists from introducing in the organization politics of any kind whatever." But while this interdiction still remained in the text of the rules the fact in practice was otherwise. "Unionism has closed the front door to the Socialistic virus, to open the back door to the Anarchistic poison." And now the more solid unions were about to try to regenerate the labor movement. The miners, railroad men, printers, textile workers, commercial employes, and others, were about to organize a Central Union Committee to promote trade unionism without party politics.

M. Niel, who is a union printer and a Socialist, had

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

written a letter published in M. Jean Jaurès's paper, *l'Humanité*, on July 6, in which he spoke of my coming visit and described the work of American trade unionism. He said it was more practical than ideal; more conservative than revolutionary. He addressed a welcome to me as the representative of the American Federation of Labor. Hence it is quite significant both of the French spirit of hospitality toward America and of the intention of the leaders and followers of the various groups in the C. G. T. to show that they were willing to hear me explain my mission, that in *La Voix du Peuple* of about the same date M. Georges Yvetot, another union printer, who is an Anarchist, and M. Niel's antagonist, also welcomed me warmly, saying in his letter that the occasion of my address before the C. G. T. would be "salutary instruction, for various reasons." I may add that during my stay in Paris M. Niel and M. Yvetot were among those who were indefatigable in showing me and my friends all possible hospitality. And when they met in the presence of us Americans they were not only respectful to us but polite to each other.

The meeting of the C. G. T. to which I had been invited I found, from the newspapers and otherwise, was attracting general attention from all that part of Paris which has an interest in social problems. What was going to take place? What would the radicals present say or do? Friday, the evening of the occasion, I went to the hall of l'Égalitaire, Rue Sambre-et-Meuse, accompanied by half a dozen American friends and also by committees representing various shades of

## FRANCE

French working-class opinion. When the meeting was opened about five hundred persons were present, the hall being packed, with many standing. I was afterward told that most of the trade union and many Socialist and Anarchist leaders of Paris were present. M. Thuillier, secretary of the Paris Central Labor Union (Union des Syndicats), presided, while M. Jouhaux, M. Niel's successor to the secretaryship of the C. G. T., was vice-president. M. Yvetot introduced me, his address being cordial and well advised in every sentence. He asked for a fair hearing for me, and earnestly said that no doubt all had something to learn from the great, successful American labor movement. No applause whatever greeted me as I arose to address the meeting. But during more than an hour, with perhaps not a score of persons in the audience who understood me, a respectful and patient attitude was maintained. Evidently the audience knew or imagined that I had something to say, and was saying it to its members, that they wanted to hear. When I had finished a former member of the American Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, Mr. D. Mikol, of Boston, who had taken longhand notes, rapidly translated my entire address into French. Several persons present who understood both languages say that the performance of his task was remarkably well done—though, as it turned out, in speaking he made one or two slips that were instantly pounced upon by critics among the so-called "intellectuals," on hand with pencils and notebooks. As Mr. Mikol proceeded in an animated manner, applause

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

became frequent. I could perceive that while certain groups were approving those expressions which were broad enough to gratify all whose hopes in mankind contemplate a higher and higher plan for labor, other groups were reserving manifestations of sympathy for the passages in which I stood up for true trade unionism. Very hearty applause came with the close of Mr. Mikol's translation. When his critics got from him his explanation that in his almost instantaneous interpretation of sentence by sentence he had, as they pointed out, employed a phrase or two not wholly warranted by a letter-perfect adherence to the original, they trained their guns upon me, shotted with the stale shibboleths and theories of an exploded Socialism. What had I to say about the "suppression" (abolition) of the employing class and the abolition of the wage system? What about the general strike? How as to antimilitarism and antipatriotism? Did not the trust in America simply raise prices when the unions raised wages, etc.? In brief I replied that I was not sure I wanted the wage system abolished; I should first like to see at closer range some of the possible results of the project of abolishing the undertakings, enterprise, and management of the highly developed industrial system of our time. As to the general strike, its utility was questionable, but in any event in the present state of labor organization in France the comparatively few organized working people were doing little more than talking about it. As a matter of fact, the continual discussion of the general strike had a tendency to keep workmen away from instead of being attracted to the



## FRANCE

unions. In any event it would be necessary to organize first for immediate material improvement, to be enabled to conduct lesser strikes to a successful result, before making the subject of a general strike the chief issue of labor. The questions of antimilitarism, anti-patriotism, and the like, were not questions in which the American working-men had been interested, but I was certain that if I were a Frenchman I would uphold my country and not have it placed at the mercy of others. I would not insist that my country should disarm while other countries were arming to the teeth, but I would ever earnestly strive for general disarmament and international peace. I showed that though misery exists in all countries, it is a fact incontrovertible that misery is less and the conditions of the workers best in those countries where wages are highest and the hours of labor least, that is, where a normal workday has been obtained. I closed my part in the evening's proceedings by urging all to cease their cross-purposes, to leave partisan politics to its field outside the labor organizations, and to come together for the clearly defined purposes of trade unionism—for the material, social, and moral uplift of all the workers, of all the people.

When the meeting broke up none of the leaders among my hearers seemed disposed to quarrel with me. Nearly all expressed pleasure, congratulated me, and shook hands with me. M. Auguste Keufer, for a quarter of a century the most prominent man in the Typographical Union of France, was delighted. Pataud, of the Electrical Workers, wanted the ad-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

dress, which had been taken down stenographically, to be printed in full, to study its points. Niel and his adherents saw much to learn from American trade unionism. Yvetot, the ruling spirit of the C. G. T., became even more cordial in his friendly attentions. Thuillier and others accompanied our little American group homeward.

The accounts of the meeting (which, following the usual practice of the French press, were published in the various newspapers in a straggling way in the course of several days) were, so far as I saw them, sympathetic; the writers recognized that I had endeavored to state facts, putting them before the French workman in the light of experience for the lessons they might teach. They saw that America really has something great in trade unionism to show France and other countries. Such conservative papers as *Le Temps*, besides describing the meeting in several columns, gave it sober leading editorials. *Le Temps*, in summing up its conclusions, said: "Will the French trade unionists some day understand the beneficent rôle the unions can play in the economic and social organization? The trade unions ought to be a part in the organism of society, not a ward machine directed against it. It ought to help in regulating the relations between the categories of production, the employers and the employed. It could be the agent of a beneficent collaboration, a source of common prosperity, instead of a cause of division between men and of an industrial paralysis."

Revolutionary, liberal, and conservative sheets all

## FRANCE

cited the principal points of my theme: The early failures in America to mingle political party creeds with trade unionism; the simplicity and unlimited scope of our organizations; the main features of our Federation; its clear and practical objects; its greatness in development; its achievements in advancing wages, reducing the hours of the workday, protecting women and children, obtaining the co-operation of the National and State Labor Departments, improving conditions in the workshop, factory, and mine, and performing the duties of great benefit societies.

In bidding *au revoir* to Paris—for I expect to be here again at the end of August to attend the International Secretariat Congress—I look back over my brief visit to the beautiful city with genuine satisfaction, in spite of the hard work which has occupied nearly my entire time. Aside from the exceptions to be expected in certain forms of business devoted to gathering in the cash of tourists, the people of Paris seem to me to be good-natured, obliging, sincerely polite, of a fine intelligence, ever ready with a sympathetic word and smile. The committeemen who acted as my hosts anticipated every wish of the little party with which I travel. My short visit has shown me a wonderful city—a hard-working city as a background to the city of pleasure seen by the stranger with little opportunity to look deeper than the surface; a city, in the main, of earnest people, characterized by a commendable pride in their personal appearance; by the expressions of many sentiments that add

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

happiness to life, and in general by a charm of manner that must at bottom spring from goodness of heart and kindly intentions toward their neighbor, whoever for the passing hour that neighbor may be.

## BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, AMSTERDAM, ETC.

BERLIN, *July 30, 1909.*

DURING the last eight days, besides making flying visits to The Hague and Bremen, I have stopped over a day or two each in Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Hamburg. In the latter cities the time at my disposal permitted me to attend labor meetings and to have interviews with local leaders in the movement, some of whom were old friends. I also obtained in each place a hasty glance at some of the harsher features of a society which compels its victims to protest, as well as at some of the results of the methods by which they protest.

Poverty such as exists in Belgium and Holland can hardly be conceived by the average dweller in an American city. In our country the able-bodied man may generally see some light of hope ahead. Work for the present may be toilsome, the quarters one lives in uninviting, the pay small, and occasionally unemployment is depressing. But on seeing how the very poor live and work in Brussels, Antwerp, and Amsterdam, one obtains a view of the truth that poverty has indeed most striking differences of degree in its deprivations and struggles. In New York even dire poverty reckons its purchases in cents or nickels, and it

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

looks forward to earning dollars; in Amsterdam coins circulate that equal in value a fifth of an American cent, and families subsist for a week on an outlay that the smallest gold piece might cancel.

It is to be accepted as true that any observer who wishes to make a point of the existence of poverty anywhere can find the material for his thesis. Infirm old age, helpless infancy, the lame, the halt, the blind — physical human feebleness in various forms everywhere—brings to the strong the duty of succor. But when one sees, not weakness but strength, and not only individuals but masses, habitually struggling for the barest subsistence, he can but find himself asking why such a state of things should be so and what can be done in the way of relief. In this spirit of inquiry I put on record some of the evidences of a chronic misery among the masses which I have witnessed during the last week.

Brussels has a large co-operative establishment organized, managed, and patronized by working-people. Its headquarters is the "Maison du Peuple." While examining the details of this voluntary association for mutual assistance, mention was made to me that a district in which "home industry" was carried on was close by. A co-operator acquainted in the neighborhood volunteered to show our party how the dwellers in the house lived and gained their bread. First going to a particular house with which our guide was best acquainted we found it to be an old one, but of substantial build. A faucet in the narrow entrance court was the only supply of water for all the occu-

## BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, AMSTERDAM, ETC.

pants. The narrow, steep stairway had just been washed and the walls calcimined. We mounted to the attic to find two small rooms, the larger about ten by eight feet, the smaller eight by six, the only daylight to each being admitted through a scuttle formed of a single pane of glass. In the living-room were the wife, a bright young woman, and four small children, housed-pale and pasty-faced. A bed, a crib, a cooking-stove, a cupboard, and a few other household effects left little space in which one could move. In the man's workroom a tailor's table took up nearly half the space. Beside it was a crib. The man, tall and well made, had an intelligent face. Directly under the scuttle of this small room stood an easel. On it was a painted flower piece, nearly finished and quite well done. His regular work was custom tailoring to order. His condition was therefore better, it was explained to me, than that of the tailors who work in their homes as employees for others. Trade was dull for the moment, and our host had turned to painting, at which, our guide said, he had once had a fair success. The rental for this attic space was \$2.50 per month, the property being owned by the city and soon to be torn down. Formerly the rental was \$3.60. The clothing of the family, especially of the children, was scant and of the least possible cost.

Those in a position to know and whose trustworthiness is unquestioned declared that at least 17 per cent of the industries of Belgium is carried on in the homes, mostly in the bedrooms of the workers, the majority living in greater squalor than what was here shown me.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

To leave this scene for the moment and to take up others. At Scheveningen, Holland's Atlantic City, a few miles from The Hague, our party, after purchasing postal cards in a little shop, had some talk with two of its young saleswomen. As some of their statements were interesting, I took up the conversation, being acquainted with the Dutch language, the speech of my ancestors. These girls worked for four gulden a week (\$1.60), out of which they paid for board two and one-half gulden, or one dollar per week. Their working hours were from eight o'clock in the morning until ten at night, including Sundays. They were neat in appearance—were obliged to be. They ate their breakfast at home. They added: "We are not permitted to take time to eat anything from the moment we enter the store at eight o'clock in the morning until we reach home, about half past ten in the evening. Then we have supper, and retire for the night. We bring some bread with us from home, and as we get a chance during the day we take a bite." They earned the current wages of salesgirls in such places. Respectable poverty at wages less than twenty-five cents a day!

The testimony of the Belgian dog with regard to poverty is emphatic. In the famous market-place before the old Town Hall in Brussels the peddlers' carts have only dogs hitched to them as a usual thing. This draft-dog, I am told, is especially bred for the purpose, being, like the cart-horse, big-boned and heavy, whatever his breed. His life seems to make him ill-tempered; it renders him also a "tough"



## BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, AMSTERDAM, ETC.

among dogs in appearance. Not infrequently he is hitched up as one of a pair in a team, his mate a bent and wrinkled woman.

A great deal not only of market produce but goods to be delivered to the household is hauled in Brussels and Antwerp by dogs and their human assistants. In Antwerp the market-place and its neighborhood the morning I was there was a pandemonium with the barking of scores—aye, hundreds—of dogs weary of their burdens and evidently protesting against their lot. The Belgium law, in its benevolence, has taken recognition of the dog as a social factor. Before the dog is permitted to be hitched up in a cart, he must have attained a certain height and weight. Of course, no such benevolent consideration protects the women. The dog, with his sad and surly looks, seems not to be satisfied with the social palliatives for his protection. If he but knew the strength of his jaws he might do more than growl and bark—he might go on strike. The delivery push-carts in Antwerp (one man furnishing the power) are in many cases as large as the two-horse wagons in use by the department stores in our large cities. Several circumstances contributed to this “motor” man’s assistance: many of the streets have a smooth pavement; the wagon is on springs; the body is evenly balanced on two huge wheels. It is astonishing how much weight a draft-man can learn to push under these “favorable” conditions and the despair of poverty. One wagon passing through a neighborhood with fine houses was loaded with nearly five hundred kilo loaves of bread, more than a thou-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

sand pounds in total weight. Another, hung with a score of empty peddlers' market-baskets, was being propelled by two boys, of perhaps ten and twelve years, and a woman apparently their mother. This party had improved on the old style of tie and ride; each took a turn at riding while the others pushed or pulled at a lively trot toward the market. I did not see them after their baskets were filled, but no doubt they had studied out some little craft tricks, to call in the aid of gravity, or in some other way to lighten the strain on them during the long trip to the quarter of the city from which their cart-sign told they came.

Amsterdam has abolished dog slavery, a city ordinance forbidding hitching them to carts. Amsterdammers are proud of the fact, and they have indeed a beautiful, progressive, modern city—in parts. But never anywhere have I seen such rags and wretchedness, such proclamation of utter want, such ingrained, dirt-begrimed poverty, as in some of the back streets of Amsterdam. Whitechapel is a bourgeois quarter in comparison. One recalls the second-hand markets of Petticoat Lane, in London, as rich department stores on seeing the display of dingy, faded, broken objects exposed for sale in several of Amsterdam's markets for old clothes and worn-out household utensils. Given a possible demand for these junk-pile goods, what could the money value be of a whole acre of them? And in places one can actually see an acre covered with dozens of stands on which are exposed for sale rusty hardware, battered china, rotten little

## BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, AMSTERDAM, ETC.

ropes, worn-to-the-handle brooms, second-hand post-cards, soiled writing-paper, the rejections of the boudoir, the waste of the counting-room, and the remnants from store or factory. What can be the value per hour of the time of the vendors of these goods? What the state of the funds of the buyers? Only in a community in which people think of their finances in fifths of a cent and are at a daily grind for a starvation wage could Amsterdam's poverty markets exist.

That impression was made a conviction when, with my travelling companions, I visited an exposition of "home industries" which had been instituted by various organizations in the city, largely at the instance of the trade unionists and the Socialists of Holland. When it became certain that this exposition would take place, and that what it must contain would be of the highest public moment, some of the prominent men in the richer classes took up with the movement, and in the end royalty itself recognized the opening, Queen Wilhelmina participating in the exercises. The promoters, after the investigations giving rise to the exposition had taken place, decided to offer among other features exact reproductions of the "homes" in which the "industries" were carried on. Accordingly, in the grounds of the exposition, which lie at the rear of the beautiful Rijks (Royal) Museum, were erected a score of huts and as many duplicates of rooms, showing how some of Holland's poor work and live. The people whose dwelling-workshops were thus shown work and live in them during the hours when the exposition is open. The only difference be-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

tween the real habitation and the reproduction in the exposition is that at the exposition the buildings are new and have electric lights, whereas in the original "homes" the occupants still use the tallow-candle. What the visitor sees brought together, therefore, is what he could see any day if he but looked about in rich Holland, where capital is so plentiful that interest has been down to 2 per cent.

While the visitor observes the men or women working, he may read on the walls a card or placard stating the exact wages earned per week, the hours of labor, and the amount of assistance given by the wife and children. In a large hall adjoining the grounds are exhibits of the articles produced in these "home industries"—wooden toys, children's playthings, clothing of all sorts, even to uniforms of army officers, wooden shoes, cigars, household utensils, brooms, brushes, paper bags, artificial flowers, and a hundred and one of the inconsiderable useful objects of everyday life—things that require small means in purchasing the raw material, but several grades of skill, patience, and endurance in turning out the product.

A catalogue summarizing the statements accompanying the exhibits of the various articles has been printed by the managers. It tells a tale no one unacquainted with the facts could readily believe, but as the exposition has the official sanction of the Government there is no ground for suspicion that the facts and figures as given are overdrawn. As "home industry" is usually performed in common by an entire family, the wages stand for all the members com-

## BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, AMSTERDAM, ETC.

bined. As stated, the minimum number of hours of labor for the head of a family was not less than sixty-six per week; the usual number was ninety per week, and in one industry—the birch-broom makers—the hours for the week were one hundred and thirty-two. The minimum wages for a man reached forty cents a day; in only a few cases did they go slightly beyond sixty cents. Whole families were working for seventy cents a day. The huts as shown were usually of dried earth, with thatched roofs, having one room, without any floor but the hard soil, and almost bare of any furniture whatsoever.

One man who was weaving reed bottoms to chairs, when asked what he could possibly buy to eat when his wages of forty cents a day were lessened by his rent, replied: "Bread and potatoes." His forty cents represented the earnings of himself, his wife, and two children. As he abruptly gave his answer in a harsh voice, without a sympathetic glance toward his questioner, and with no trace of a smile, this fellow seemed to be resentful of something. Was it of his fate or his questioner's impertinence? His earnings of less than four cents an hour in this day of five-thousand-dollar automobiles were grotesque enough to arouse strange feelings among his visitors. Some youngsters in the rear of the group looking at him laughed aloud. Others of us shivered at the spectacle, and were seized with a strange horror. In both cases there was shock. From youth came derision that any human being would daily stand that gross insult and inhumanity from the civilization about him. Why not revolt

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

against it somehow? From us in the labor movement, quite apart from our aroused sensations of sympathy, was evoked the query: "What practical help can and ought the rest of us give this man and his fellows, now, to-day?"

Holland's statesmen are discussing the suppression of the industries carried on in the workers' miserable homes. Law is to do it somehow. The active spirits among the working people and those prominent in the management of the exposition are studying what can be done to mitigate the sad condition of the underpaid, overworked, underfed workers. The Holland trade unions are organizing those workers whose occupations and numbers offer a field for union action. The unions have already done much in the cities of Holland to raise wages—a subject to which I shall refer in another letter. But, after all, there is one fact which must be recognized in any plan for the uplifting of men. The individual must rise to the level of the agency that would reach him or her. Women collectively up to the present time have not generally proved themselves to be the best trade unionists because as individuals they have not tried through their own joint action to attain the level of men unionists. I have seen in the United States, and I know it to be true in other countries, that women have made the most heroic, self-sacrificing contests in industry for improvement as well as for unionism and for principle. My comment, however, is of the general characteristic of the course of women workers. The trade unionist must, if not precede, at least "arrive" at the same

## BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, AMSTERDAM, ETC.

time as trade unionism. And so with other social institutions intended to help the poorest of the poor. After all, they must be helped to help themselves.

A few days ago I was shown an apartment in an improved dwelling for the working-classes. Every set of rooms, I was told, had its bath-room. Most interesting! The apartment in question had three rooms for the family, consisting of a husband, wife, and five children. There was a bedroom with three beds side by side in which the family slept; a living-room, not badly furnished; a kitchen, well planned. A tiny compartment at one side was the bath-room. I looked in on it. Was it to be the old story of the bath-tub filled with coal stored for the kitchen fire? The room was three feet by five, with a small window at one end. No tub, but the walls and floor were of concrete, with a drain-pipe opening at one end in the floor. A single shower-faucet was overhead. Very good indeed in theory, this bath-room. The faucet could only give cold water, and that was not always encouraging to the habit of bathing. Contents of the room: a large bird-cage (hanging up), several baskets of wood and vegetables, numerous boxes, pieces of crockery ware, kitchen utensils, etc. The bath-room could be used for bathing, that is a fact, if one worked a quarter of an hour at least in taking out the non-bath-room articles. So we see that the desire to give a man a bath may not be met by a want to take a bath.

There is no end to the difficulties of social problems. But because all people who ought to be civilized do not at once accept the customs of civilization is no

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

reason why those customs ought not to be insisted upon. The thought and the action of uplifting mankind depend upon the fact that in general people have that in them which in time will bring them up to the level of the best. In general, the poorest and most lowly of Europe's immigrants to our country have risen with their larger opportunities in America.



## THE REMARKABLE GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONISM IN GERMANY

BERLIN, *August 7, 1909.*

THE rise of trade unionism in Germany during the last fifteen years to its present commanding position among social reform forces has been a fact of the very first importance to the wage workers of the entire civilized world. This movement of the German industrial working-men, almost in a mass, from comparative economic incohesion and dependence to a state of excellent organization, with some of the best features of English and American trade unionism, is its own evidence that the trade union was the one needed immediate agency to carry out objects essential to a positive advance in the well-being of the people.

The statistics indicating the growth of the unions are eloquent. In form the organized workers of Germany are in three distinct general bodies — the "Centralverbände" (corresponding to our American Federation of Labor), the "Christian" unions, and the "Hirsch - Dunker" unions. The Centralverbände's growth has been:

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Year	No. of Members	Increase in Year	Per Cent.
1894	246,494	22,964	10.2
1895	259,175	12,681	5.2
1896	329,230	70,055	27.0
1897	412,359	83,129	25.2
1898	493,742	81,383	19.7
1899	580,473	86,731	17.5
1900	680,427	99,954	17.2
1901	677,510	.....	....
1902	733,206	55,696	8.2
1903	887,698	154,492	21.0
1904	1,052,108	164,410	18.5
1905	1,344,803	292,695	27.8
1906	1,689,709	344,906	25.6
1907	1,865,506	175,797	10.4

At present the number of members in the Central-verbände, notwithstanding a loss of 75,000 in the crisis year of 1905, is more than 2,000,000.

The Christian unions, those promoted in Germany by the Roman Catholic Church, have undergone a considerable development in the last decade:

Year	No. of Members	Increase in Year	Per Cent.
1900	159,770	.....	....
1901	160,772	1,002	0.6
1902	179,799	19,027	11.8
1903	192,617	12,818	7.1
1904	207,484	14,877	7.7
1905	265,032	57,548	27.7
1906	320,248	55,216	20.8
1907	354,760	34,512	10.8

The Hirsch - Dunker unions have also in recent years had some augmentation in their numerical strength. In 1902 they had 102,851 members; in 1907, 108,889.

The existence of these three separate organizations

## GROWTH OF UNIONISM IN GERMANY

is to be explained partly by regional growth, which, however, itself arose originally from religious and political differences. The Hirsch - Dunker unions, founded by the two Liberal leaders whose names they bear, exist mainly in Silesia and the east of Germany. The Catholic unions were instituted by the leaders in the church when the wage workers among its communicants displayed an unmistakable tendency to enter the Centralverbände. Three-fourths of their numbers are in the Rhenish districts and the West. In their earlier years these Catholic unions declared that all their rights could be secured by loyalty to employers. Experience has shown, however, that power to defend rights is an essential for their enforcement.

In recent years the needs of trade union co-operation have frequently brought together the three general bodies, or local unions belonging to the three, so that to-day for certain practical purposes Germany may be said to have their entire 2,500,000 members united. The three organizations are represented in some towns, or even districts, in a joint committee. In such cases they have stood by one another in strikes and lockouts. All three general organizations were interested in establishing the "home-work" exposition in Berlin several years ago, when the economic injury of home work was shown. Gradually, also, modifications have taken place in the spirit and doctrines of each. The Hirsch - Dunker unions, formerly derided by the stronger unions as mere benefit societies, are now prone to go on strike. The Catholic unions as

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

such are much less inclined than formerly to yield to the dominance of church opinion in so far as the immediate material interests of the workers are concerned. The Centralverbände unions at present concede that every member may vote as he will; they do not coddle the political party idea of the 1st of May general strike; the individual members are yearly learning to expect less help from party and more from unions; the union leaders act quite independently of the party leaders in purely union matters. The day when the party leaders could declare that forming trade unions is useless, that the progress of the masses must depend solely on political action, that the trade-union effort to secure the absolute legal right of coalition was wrong and was an invasion of party jurisdiction, has passed entirely away. The German workman knows better.

The trade unions in Germany are not like many of those in Belgium, for example—mere lists of names inscribed at one time or another in a register, according to occupation, by men who do not expect to pay regular dues. They are to-day uniformly made up of members entered in their union permanently, usually paying high dues and assessments in proportion to their wages, ready through self-imposed discipline to strike or to take a lockout, and whenever entitled receiving the cash benefits common to English or American labor organizations. As a rule, the union of a trade is capable of meeting the needs of its members for strike payments as well as for sick, death, and out-of-work benefits or other provident features.

## GROWTH OF UNIONISM IN GERMANY

These comprehensive facts relative to the rapid increase in numbers of the German unions, the changes in their methods in order to adapt themselves to directly practical instead of theoretical purposes, and the solid character of their organization, imply the further fact—of the first importance—that they have been the chief factor in bringing about the undeniable improvement of recent years in the average German worker's condition in life.

Great industrial progress came to Germany only after it had been achieved in England and America. The German working-men, observing the enormous increase of production in their country, at first gave the proletariat political movement a fair and full trial. On its failure to yield the immediate results at which they aimed, they turned to the process of selling their labor collectively instead of in competition. They have consequently taken an increased and ever increasing share in Germany's prosperity. The rapid rise in wages to be noted in a few occupations prior to 1894—plainly, for the most part, the effect of trade unionism, became with the spread of effective organization a fact general to all unionized callings. The reproach, common among English and American organized wage workers so late as fifteen years ago, that their German brothers were dreamers, working at slavish wages while wasting their time and strength in vain political struggles, is no longer tenable. The effective militant front presented to the employing class and privileged class interests in Germany in 1909 is that offered by the trade union.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

The facts as to the rise of wages in the German trades as well as the shortening of the workday consequent on organization are indisputable. Few men of any party or profession in the country now attempt to put the case otherwise. No opponent of trade unionism could challenge the facts after visiting the national center of trade unions at No. 15 Engel Ufer, Berlin, and weighing the testimony to be offered there in their offices by the secretaries of the scores of national unions on the subject. There is uniformly but one story to be told—that of organization, subsequent effective demands on employers, the continued development of union strength, loyalty of the members, some financial provision for every idle member during the trials of unemployment or other suspension of earnings, and always attaining step by step higher wages, shorter hours, and better shop and home conditions. I take the space here to give examples of the rise in wages of but two trades, my statements in this letter necessarily being of a general character rather than of the detailed particulars to be expected in a statistical report. The union Berlin brewery workers who in 1895 received 24 to 26 marks a week now have a minimum of 35. In 1890 the saddlers were paid 18 marks a week for from ten to eleven hours a day; in 1909 they have 27 to 28 marks for nine hours, with all the workmen at the trade in the union. I recall the fact that a few weeks before I left for this side of the Atlantic, while our recent tariff bill was under discussion in the Senate, quite a hubbub of excitement was created on account of a letter which a branch of the German

## GROWTH OF UNIONISM IN GERMANY

Government had sent to our United States Government on the wages and conditions of German workmen in certain industries. I am told from reliable sources that the figures given in that communication are correct, but as one of the active union men significantly remarked: "The document does not state that the improvements were fought by the Government and won by the workers through their struggles and sacrifices."

On the question of the rise in prices of food, the union leaders interviewed by me are of one mind that while in some of the staples of the market there has been a considerable advance, this is not the case in general. Moreover, higher prices, where they have occurred, are far from overtaking the increase in wages. Fruit is cheaper than in Great Britain. But little more than the rent money that formerly secured a habitation in the slums, which are fast disappearing in the larger cities, now commands a neat though small apartment in an improved working-men's quarter. It is a matter of common comment among the working-classes that the attire of the present generation of young people is much better than that of their parents when young. And the elders can afford to spruce up, too. "Twenty years ago," said one of the leaders to me, "very few of our class appeared in a frock-coat on the occasion of our festivals. Now large numbers do. The wives and daughters dress much better, and they know how to dress. Our working-men in general take daily newspapers, and with their families regularly patronize places of amusement, which they could not do form-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

erly. In many little ways they show proof that they are living on a higher plane than years ago.

Another feature of the new life for the workers in Germany is travel. The skilled wage earners, especially the young men, are fond of going about in their own country from town to town, to "see the world." In itself this is an education. The travelled journeyman returns to his native place, to visit or to remain, with new ideas upon the questions interesting to his class—the plain people. The newest methods of trade unionism are in this manner spread to the membership everywhere in the empire. So also as to the projects of municipal betterment and similar modern social ideas.

The newer features of factory legislation in Prussia, the union leaders hold, have been due almost entirely to the increased strength of the unions. As a matter of fact, they say if the unions do not see to it, factory laws in many cases are not enforced. The statutes, as required by the Government, may be posted in an establishment, but that does not cause them to enforce themselves. Unionists inform their own officials of infractions, whereupon Government inspectors are stirred up and the grievances are remedied without obliging an employe to put his situation in jeopardy by a protest either to employer or representatives of the law. Not until the unions took on their great power, beginning about fifteen years ago, was it common in the factories to have the regulations relative to meal-times, payment of wages, hours of labor, fines and penalties, etc., printed and put up on a bulletin



## GROWTH OF UNIONISM IN GERMANY

board. It was the unions which were foremost in carrying on the long fight—especially against employers in the textile trades—which resulted in the laws now preventing the employment of children under thirteen years of age at all, and of children between thirteen and fourteen more than six hours a day. The laws, recently passed, protecting women from night-work and certain forms of overwork, were long discussed in the labor organizations and demanded by them of the Reichstag before their adoption.

The Government now recognizes the right of organization for all wage workers except servants and agricultural laborers. The unions are striving to remove the disabilities of these classes. The laws in regard to sailors have been amended in the last few years, giving the men a larger liberty in carrying out trade-union purposes.

This progress of trade unionism in Germany, and its consequent beneficial effects upon large masses of the working-people, are in total violation of Socialist party gospel and dogma, as interpreted by the old school of its leaders. Things have not worked out according to the cataclysmic scheme of its prophet. The "proletariat" were to sink deeper and deeper into misery. Conditions, through the very vices of competition, were perforce to be worse before they could ever be better. But impious interferers have clogged the wheels that were to grind the workers down, reversed the capitalistic machinery, and actually caused it to turn out better wages, better conditions—in a word, a better life. A general strike was to be the

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

form of the final social explosion. It was to be followed by a reconstruction of the society thus shattered. But, on the contrary, well-planned strikes in trades organized to treat with employers intelligently have rendered the bulk of the German working-classes indifferent to the politicians' theory of a general strike. In many another way, through municipal or other social improvements, to which I shall refer in a future letter, the German wage worker has seen life made less hard for him. All this means that he is gradually taking a place along with the other classes in the higher civilization of our day. He lives in an age which witnesses the greatest production, the most wealth, the highest general intelligence, and the best reasons for hope for his class that the history of the world has recorded. Large numbers of the German working-men are actually, in appearance, mode of living, and individual development generally, becoming among the best-looking of Germany's people. They are losing the distinctive type of the drudge. These achievements have come in spite of Government and "capitalist" antagonism as well as Socialist pessimism.

## THE REAL INSPIRATION TO-DAY IN PILSEN

VIENNA, *August 12, 1909.*

THE most interesting event of my journey during the last week was a visit to Pilsen. The name of this town brings a smile to the American connoisseur in light liquid refreshment, but I shall hereafter during my life remember Pilsen, not for its beer, but for the quickening into life of a great people's movement that has supplanted the conventional methods of both institutional philanthropies and old-established political parties in helping the masses.

From Berlin I travelled to Dresden and thence to Prague, devoting two days to each city.

It came about unexpectedly, that visit to Pilsen, through my being thrown much in Prague into the company of a Labor member of the Austrian Reichstag. A word as to his personality and life-story will serve to illustrate the social changes which are nowadays so rapidly succeeding one another in Austria. In Prague, on the day of my arrival, a conference was being held by the Bohemian Social Democratic members of the Reichstag at the labor headquarters for the province. They made me and my party welcome and showed us about the city, which with its suburbs has now a population of more than four hundred

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

thousand. Of course, the public developments due to the efforts of organized labor took up most of my attention. If I do not dwell upon such features as the newly acquired labor headquarters, an immense three-story double building, each wing more than a hundred feet in length, situated in the heart of the town, or the large printing-office in another district, it is because I have in mind the story of Herr Gustav Habermann and my visit to Pilsen. I may say, however, that the Bohemian national trade unions and the Social Democratic party together have paid \$30,000 on their headquarters, leaving a mortgage of \$200,000; that it has been in their possession for two years; and that its restaurant, with a large garden, is a favorite gathering-place daily for the working-people, the garden serving for concerts as well as for large open-air mass-meetings. A visit to the suites of offices of the various national unions gave me an opportunity to see that business in each was conducted with the system of a large corporation; in fact, the secretaries, book-keepers, typewriters, and others had much of the bearing and manner of the busy, disciplined public functionaries, so numerous everywhere I have been on the European Continent.

On the way to Pilsen, Herr Habermann, in reply to inquiries, told his story. Twenty-odd years ago he spent three years in prison. On being liberated he went to the United States, where he worked for eight years as a wood turner, mostly in New York and Chicago. Twelve years ago he returned to Bohemia, settling in his home city, Pilsen. His term of im-

## REAL INSPIRATION TO-DAY IN PILSEN

prisonment, spent in solitary confinement, he suffered in consequence of the publication of political sentiments. "But," he said, "the things I then said and printed and for which I was imprisoned are now being published with impunity every day in the year by the party and trade-union papers. The last twenty years has seen the greatest progress in political liberty that Austria has ever known." Not being given work in prison, Herr Habermann studied French and English. His sentence was for four years, but as three days of good conduct counted four, he was released at the end of three years. I asked what else he had learned. He smiled and replied: "To wait." I could well imagine that during those months and years of waiting, his character developed and his face gradually took on its patient, kind, firm, manly expression. His seat in Parliament, he said, was due largely to the farmers. In one village he had received three hundred and fifty out of four hundred votes. Asked if he favored the social revolution, he answered that he regarded sending a man to the Parliament of Austria for the same sentiments that had sent him to prison twenty years before already marked a revolution. The Social Democratic party had had very little representation in the Reichstag even six years ago; now it has eighty-nine members out of nearly six hundred.

And now that they were in the Reichstag, what were they doing?

"Well," was the reply, "they were a part of the opposition."

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

"Opposition to the Emperor, to establish a democracy?"

"No," he could not say the party was actively opposing the Emperor as such, "but it favored the people."

"What was the foremost measure advocated at the last session of the Reichstag by the party?"

"The old-age pension scheme."

"No Government ownership of industries?"

"No."

In fact, the most pressing task of the working-people's deputies, from his statements, seemed to be protesting against excessive compulsory military service and those taxes bearing most heavily on the poor. He described to us, as had been done before and since by others, the difficulties of promoting legislation for the people in Austria. He could count eight languages spoken in different parts of the empire, with many dialects. The population is divided by boundaries that signify differences, not only in language, but in race, history, and in cases of religion and industry. These and similar facts, known to us Americans simply by description, and seen at a great distance, evidently are as big as mountains to the imperial legislator representing part of a province.

Herr Habermann gave us the statistics of land-ownership in Bohemia—the story of Scotland over again, or worse. A few hundred great landowners, chiefly of the nobility tracing their possessions to a feudal ancestry, own vast areas; the number of proprietary farmers owning five acres or less forms but

## REAL INSPIRATION TO-DAY IN PILSEN

a small percentage of the population that gains a livelihood from agriculture. But he could not say that the land question was at present really a live issue in the Parliament. Both the trade unions and his party in the province were to-day greatly interested in gaining autonomy for Bohemia. The unions wanted an independent existence for the people speaking the Bohemian language, with, of course, "treaties" with the other unions of Austria.

Before relating what really interested us in Pilsen, I will say that as all visitors to the town are expected to visit the big brewery, we were taken there by our hosts representing the trade unions. The "Bürgerliches Brauerei" is to the eye at a distance a conglomeration of immense buildings, high circular chimneys, big brick water-towers, etc., covering many acres of ground. We were conducted for two hours and more in and about the works by a guide who, in a sonorous voice, rolled off the stupendous statistics of the brewery's beer production with an air of reverence for the figures in themselves and for the god Gambrinus above them all. To that guide the culmination of all the things in the world mighty and good was beer. I rather felt our time was to a degree wasted in wandering down into subterranean malt-rooms, thirty acres in extent, and up past malt-houses of the dimensions of railway stations, and looking at beer kegs as big as freight-cars that were being made or repaired, tested, pitched, and filled. But it being one of the great liquid facts of this earth, we saw the show through. The crowning curiosity of it all was

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

the original vat of the brewery, now battered and time-worn, set as a sort of sanctified relic on a green hillock surrounded by beds of flowers and duly and historiographically inscribed. Brewery features are considered the points of interest in Pilsen. But I refer to some of them only because I have also to state that wages in this famously rich brewery run on the grand average for the thirty-five hundred workmen from \$2.50 to \$5.00 a week! We saw some of the eating-places of the single men who boarded within the brewery. They were swinish. This brewery employs only unorganized workmen. An attempt was made some time ago to improve their condition through organization. As the story goes, the manager, on receiving a committee from the men, said that their representations sounded reasonable and he would review their demands at a general meeting of the workmen. When assembled the men were asked if many of them really were organized, and if so to make a showing of the fact by a division—the unorganized to stand fast and the organized to move to one side. Done. “Very well,” pronounced the manager, “you union men are discharged. Pack up and leave the brewery at once.”

We were conducted to the scene of an exposition being held by the trade unions and the party in Pilsen. The indoor exhibits were installed in the headquarters, an imposing edifice purchased and remodelled by the working-men within the last few years. The outdoor exhibits, with a number of popular resort features—the cinematograph, the merry-



## REAL INSPIRATION TO-DAY IN PILSEN

go-round, shoot - the - chutes, model cottages, etc.—covered the spacious gardens adjoining the headquarters and several acres of adjacent grounds, temporarily rented, separated from the gardens by a turgid mountain stream, which had been bridged for the occasion by the municipality. In all, the exposition was a highly creditable display, mostly of the manufactures of Pilsen, not including beer, with especially, in the outdoor part, agricultural implements, and in the indoor, many souvenirs and pictorial illustrations of the work of the trade unions and the party in various countries. A set of those diagrams which show statistical data by means of squares and lines of varying lengths gave speedily interpreted visual information as to the growth of trade unionism and co-operation and the party, not only for Pilsen, but all Bohemia. The leading notable fact on these points was that, by a great percentage, the real growth in all these respects has taken place within the last five years. Bohemia, like the other parts of Austria that have taken up with the modern working-class movements, is in the first flush of hope and victory. Labor has burst some of its bonds. It is eager to go on in its achievements. Does it know just to what stage it has advanced and just where it is going? Time will tell the story.

A great meeting took place in the evening in the people's building restaurant-hall. From the beginning of the gathering to the end there was a series of demonstrations of unbounded enthusiasm. A men's chorus, strong and good, sang a dozen airs,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

either songs of their fatherland or glees of the labor movement. Out on the grounds a brass-band played. Later a fine orchestra on the stage gave an excellent program, most of the numbers strange to us, but all marked by unusual spirit, rhythm, and precision. One after another the national and international anthems of labor—Russian, Polish, Italian, French, German, and others—brought out prolonged bursts of applause, with demands for repetition.

We had been sitting perhaps two hours enjoying these scenes when one of our hosts told us that as Herr Habermann had telegraphed to the workingmen's daily newspaper that we were to be present this evening, a number of people of the town not connected with the working-class movement had come to hear something about America. Over at one part of the hall, our informants pointed out, were some supporters of the clericals; and in another, little groups of business men; and here and there were soldiers, risking two weeks in the guard-house for coming to the people's meeting-place. An address of welcome to the Americans was made by the chairman of the managing committee, and then, being introduced in the Bohemian tongue, I made a short address in English, being aware that not half-a-dozen persons in the house could understand me. All the same, at the conclusion there came a hearty round of applause; at the close of its interpretation, another. The big heart of the people in all countries is the same.

Among those spectators who now came to our table to have a word, while the orchestra was playing, was

## REAL INSPIRATION TO-DAY IN PILSEN

a young man who, as he stated, had been a very active Socialist agitator in Chicago, where he had lived some years. He had returned to Pilsen to his parents, who were growing old and had some property. He was not now active in the party. He said he knew, of course, and knew that I knew, that capitalism was swallowing all industries, one after another. The social revolution was, therefore, inevitable. But circumstances at present prevented him from taking any part in the revolutionary movement. He repeated the story of the big strike in Austria in 1905, that hastened reforms of the ballot and otherwise; told of the progress under various European governments of working-men's accident, sickness, and pension schemes; denounced the capitalists of America for avoiding the liabilities of employers in cases of accidents, and found cause enough in this fact—and the inevitable progressive monopoly—for prophesying a Socialist society of the future. "But," he added, "the Social Democratic party of Austria is in no-wise a revolutionary party." When he left me I asked myself how many other revolutionists are to quit when they acquire a little property.

When at midnight our party left the hall it was still crowded. As we passed out, a long, loud, and hearty hurrah was our parting salute. Herr Habermann saw us on our train at one o'clock in the morning.

In this outline of facts, little and big, regarding our visit to Pilsen, I have tried to suggest to the reader something of the impressions they made upon me. The aggressive opponents of social injustice are not

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

working in our civilized world under exactly the same degree of illumination. In various countries they have developed different methods, modified by historical events and social conditions. Certainly the work done during the last five years in Pilsen, as an example of many places in Austria, has been noteworthy. The developments of voluntary co-operation are admirable. Those of trade unionism are fine, as beginnings. Some common agency designed to remove political disabilities non-existent in our country was necessary. Some combination of representatives, answerable to democratic constituencies, has also been essential in the Parliament to look out for the welfare of the classes so long neglected. All very well. But why couple these practical movements with the visionary schemes of the guessers at social evolution of half a century ago? Why jumble together the clear ideas that are necessary regarding the work now being done by the people with the misty stuff fed to them by so-called "intellectuals," who have been so often discredited by events, the course of which has run to the contrary of their predictions, especially in regard to their favorite dictum, "Things must become worse before they can be better"? As Herr Habermann in effect said to me: "What I was sent to prison for twenty years ago everybody can say, print, and do to-day without fear."

It is the contention of the American labor movement, and it is mine, that the great social revolution will not come with a bang and a crash. It is going on now, every day, everywhere in the world, and in

## REAL INSPIRATION TO-DAY IN PILSEN

the most advanced countries it moves fastest. In them it is most practical. It can be held, for example, by those best acquainted with the American labor movement that our organizations would hardly leave the Pilsen brewery at peace, as is being done by the Austrian labor movement, while it conducted its business under such non-union conditions. We might not vote in the United States with a grand hurrah for the nationalization of rainbows in the year 2000, but we would have thirty-five hundred better-paid, better-conditioned brewery workers in a jiffy—or we would abstain, at least, from Pilsner beer.

## THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER AND HER FELLOW-LABORERS

BUDAPEST, Hungary, *August 15, 1909.*

My fourth day in this picturesque city, with its mediæval as well as up-to-date features, finds me supplied with material which, treated from different points of view, might take up quite a series of letters. From the Government and the labor organizations have come statistical and other statements sufficient at once to gratify the sociologist who gains revelations from tabulated figures and to frighten away the reader whom arithmetic tires. But from tours of personal observation in the big place, now with a population of nearly a million, there has come to me much interesting information not easily adapted to the formation of economic reports.

For instance, there is the Budapest hod-carrier. The picture she presents, going about her draft-horse work barefoot, climbing ladders or mounting inclined planks to the upper stories of a big new building, can hardly be represented truthfully in a photograph, to say nothing of her enumeration in a column of figures that classifies industrial workers. The soles of those broad feet of hers are as callous as hogskin trunk-covers, her toe-nails are blackened and torn

## THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER

from stubbing them against bricks and beams. She plants her legs, bared half way to the knee, somewhat in the manner of a mule, with cautious but certain tread, as she moves along on a single plank or beam aloft. She is bunchy about the waist; her head-cover is a kerchief not overclean, but usually of a gay color. Her features betoken nothing in particular, except an undeveloped brain; her movements are not energetic, as one might deem natural, if he is reasonable, on remembering her sex—actually, she is a woman!—and her probable standard of nourishment. She is paid about as much for a week's work as a New York hod-carrier earns in a day. She is here in Budapest to the number of two thousand, this total easily possible of an increase on demand. She has no trade union. According to her strength, steadiness, and experience, she gets thirty, thirty-five, forty cents a day. She is by no means in every case a shrivelled old woman; not infrequently youthful, stalwart, she looks as if she might appear comely if engaged in a feminine occupation. She handles the mortar-hoe and the sand-shovel clumsily. Her "hod" is a handbarrow, which is carried by two of her species. The pair of them bear it like a funeral bier, filled with dripping mortar or heavy brick, up to the man "who does the work"—the bricklayer. Then they may return down with a load of débris, to dump it in the street. I took a full score of snapshots of this flower of Budapest's civilization—a feature somehow missed by the post-card men.

There is another woman in Budapest, not unknown

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

in any large city, given over to what, in the irony of words thoughtlessly employed, is called sport. Here she is even more in evidence than her virtuous sister, the hod-carrier. She walks the streets day and night, in some quarters fairly in herds. At the cafés, which in Budapest are numerous, gilded, brilliant with light, and rendered attractive by Hungarian gypsy bands, this woman seems to be regarded as much of a requisite among the appointments as the white cover for the table or the dress-suit of the waiter. The observer of the manners and customs of the Budapest people might estimate that many thousands of her women, one day or other in their lives, had deliberately taken a choice between carrying the hod in honest rags and carrying the stigma of an outcast in flimsy finery.

This dreadful fate of its poor women is an index to Hungary's grade among the nations. The low standing of the country, if the misery shown the traveller as typical is really so, is enough to make its patriots mourn and move its friends to pity. It is a certainty that tourist observations, the testimony of prominent men interviewed, and the statistical tables all agree in showing the Hungarian people to be hardly in the earlier stages of the present great awakening of social reform.

When the narrator of his impressions in Europe touches upon the topic of the low wages of the masses in any country he has visited, the person to whom he is speaking, especially if an Englishman or an American, interrupts to remind him that money wages are not a complete index to real earnings; the cost of



## THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER

living cannot be left out of the calculation. So, let us glance at prices in Budapest.

There's the matter of rent, usually rated by economists as much higher in America than in Europe. For hours yesterday and day before I was conducted through several working-class quarters of the city. Such squalor, such composites of all things to be classed as dirt, such indiscriminate heaping together of human beings, I have never seen elsewhere. And their dens and holes of dwelling-places cost the miserably poor occupants more per square foot of space than is paid by the prosperous artisan in any American city for his home, with all its civilized accommodations. The common type of dwelling-houses in Budapest, as in several Austrian and German cities I have visited, is a poor adaptation of the French flat, the apartments being arranged about an interior court-yard. In the poor working-people's quarters the houses are of but one or two stories, with several court-yards one after another extending far back from the street. There is one water-tap to each court-yard, which in the centre has an opening in the pavement for drainage to the sewer or in some districts simply to a cesspool. In every court-yard I saw were several puddles of foul water, besides the ruck and garbage about the drain. At one of these rookeries an energetic man, of the somewhat rare dark type of Hungarian, came forward from a poor man's café (a hole-in-the-wall finished in zinc, instead of the mirrors and mahogany of the city's fashionable public lounging resorts), and said, heartily:

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

"Hallo! I American too; was in New York t'ree year; I show you house, yass?"

He took me through a dozen "apartments" facing in upon four court-yards. He walked into each dwelling without knocking or asking leave.

"Don't take off your hat," he said; "dese people expects nottin'. What rent tink you dey pays? Dey don't get de cheap rents of New York."

He quoted prices current in New York for small new flats. Then he indicated the rates for Budapest, his information being confirmatory of what was given me by other persons for other housings in the city.

Examples: For one narrow dwelling-room and a dark kitchen, \$2 a week; two rooms and a kitchen, \$3.50; room and no kitchen, \$2. In cases were higher rentals. On the lower story the floors were all of stone, badly worn. The furniture in nearly every instance was "a few poor sticks." Our voluble guide told us that in this house dwelt seventy-six families. Nearly all took lodgers. While showing us one apartment of two narrow, badly lighted rooms and a dark little box of a kitchen he asked the woman who rented it how many were in her family. The reply was her man and two children. And how many lodgers? The guide thus interpreted her answer: "She has six mans, and two of the mans is womans!" This kennel-like existence, so far from being uncommon, is the everyday experience of the poverty-stricken masses in Budapest. Our party was taken to see many such tenement-houses as that just mentioned. The repellent scene was everywhere much the same, the

## THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER

best examples being of a mode of living unknown to Americans and the worst a realistic picture of an earthly inferno. Our guide, pointing out one apartment after another, said he knew of "whole houses" in several American cities for which the rental was lower.

Perhaps an impression of existing housing conditions may be obtained from the statement of one fact. The Government, some time ago, decided to build a number of working-class tenements. Some of these houses are in course of construction. The apartments are to consist of one room and a kitchen—the room about seven by ten feet, the kitchen about five by ten. The reader can imagine what the home life of the workers must now be when the Government's modern and model dwellings are to consist of such cramped, insufficient quarters.

As to the cost of clothing, we had with us a highly intelligent young man, a Hungarian labor leader, who, having spent a year and a half in America, was qualified to make comparisons. He now buys American shoes regularly because of their comparative cheapness, their comfortable fit, and their neat appearance, though he is obliged to pay more for them than New York prices. Suits of clothes and hats, he said, were of better make, and, quality considered, just as cheap in America as in Hungary. Our inquiries did not end with him, but from all sources accessible we obtained the same testimony.

The general run of wages in Budapest may be inferred from these rates for certain occupations:

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Bricklayers, paid by the hour and losing part time in the warm season through bad weather, and four or five months in winter, receive \$1 to \$1.20 a day; carpenters, working under the same conditions, \$1.10 to \$1.50 for a day of ten hours. In the milling industry, which has the lead in Hungary, until recently the rates ran from 55 to 85 cents a day for laborers, some of them partly skilled, and about \$1.50 for the men in the more highly skilled positions. Under a trade agreement made in June last wages in the mills were standardized and increased by a few cents. The printers of Hungary have 95 per cent of the men and women in their occupation organized. In Budapest the minimum union scale for day compositors calls for \$7 a week, but on the average the wages reach a little more than \$8.

On visiting the central offices of several trade unions in Budapest one might infer that the organized-labor movement was well advanced in Hungary, though this is far from the fact. The iron-workers and stone-cutters have good buildings of their own, with spacious suites of offices. The bricklayers are about finishing one of the largest and handsomest buildings in Budapest, situated in a fashionable residential neighborhood. The printers have a six-story building, Gutenberg House, which is an ornament to the city. It takes up a block front, the ground floor being occupied as stores, and it contains a large meeting-hall and numerous apartments for families. These trade-union buildings have in each case at least three distinct suites of offices, with three sets of books. This

## THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER

fact arises from the attitude of the Government toward the unions. The union proper, usually in a state of suspension by official order, has one set of books. The benefit societies, which make the usual payments in cases of sickness, death, or out of work, have a second. A newspaper which is not, officially, a part of the union has a third set; and thereby hangs a tale. Somehow, when the members of a union in Hungary quit work in a body, the weekly payments commonly made by unions in free countries to strikers or locked-out workers is made to them from the newspaper's funds! Only members of the union can subscribe for the newspaper, and its subscription price is much the same as the dues of a union might be—that is, five to ten dollars a year. Surely men have a right to subscribe to a newspaper which insures them to a certain amount in case of being jointly out of work. It may be that the funds of the union benefit societies and the funds of the newspaper are invested in the fine trade-union halls of Budapest. The properties are mostly, however, under heavy mortgages—drawn from the resources of capitalism.

In few civilized countries are the trade unions weaker than in Hungary. There are only about one hundred thousand members, the entire population, with Croatia, being nearly twenty millions. For this there are many causes, but the most immediate is the hostility of the Government as represented at present by a man at the head of the department which deals with labor organizations. While by the statutes working-men are at entire liberty to form unions, this

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

official has the power first to look into their purposes and legal standing, and he thus usually finds reasons to forbid their formation. In the case of established unions he harasses them by restrictions and suspensions, so that much of whatever they may do renders them liable to be dissolved. No one spoken with found any defence for the policy of this man. His name is Kossuth. His father, known as one of the revolutionists of 1848, was hailed as an apostle of liberty during his visit to America on his release from prison, after his participation in the events of that year. Among the most active of the present reactionary Kossuth's opponents are the working-men of Hungarian birth now in America. They send heavy subscriptions steadily to the *Volksstimme*, the organ of the most radical of the opponents of the Government.

The manner in which the administration deals with the unions and habitually aids the employing class was shown in a recent dispute between a teamsters' union and the representatives of large landed proprietors. The same event afforded an illustration of how the wily unionists manage to turn the oppressive laws to their own account. Some wheat teamsters having struck, the Government suspended the union and took possession of its funds, declaring them to be the property of the individual members. The employers of the members not on strike, for purposes of intimidation, then locked out their men. Thereupon the latter, taking their turn at operating the law for themselves, appealed for their pro rata share of the

## THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER

union's out-of-work benefit funds, which the Government department itself paid them at the rate of so much per week as long as they applied for it. The employers looked at the transaction dubiously, as to them it seemed simply that the Government was guaranteeing and administering the strike fund to the union members. Nothing could be done to prevent the transaction, and the employers gave up the fight, with all Budapest laughing at them.

The wheat-mill workers' trade agreement with their employers is, for the most part, the result of the labors of an earnest Hungarian sociologist who is a student of the methods of American trade unionism. It is a detailed formal contract which provides for recognition of the union and grants its scale of wages. The present agreement, signed June 15 last, is drawn up for two years. It is extra-legal. Neither the employers' association nor the mill-workers' union exists to the knowledge of the Government. Both sides, however, apart from their possible legal existence as something else, have separate trustees, a separate treasury, and a separate organization which might possibly come together secretly for trade agreement purposes. A patriotic friend of both sides told me that this agreement, while in advance of anything the Government would recognize, was also beyond the wishes of the employers and above the heads of the employes in the grist-mills. On this latter point one of the items in the agreement possesses its significance. It provides that the men, on coming away from their

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

work, must not be searched in public. But they may be in private!

The limits of space oblige me to restrict myself now to a few broad statements bearing on the conditions of the Hungarian working-classes. With at least four million men who under manhood suffrage would democratically guide the State, only eight hundred thousand have the voting franchise. In the unorganized occupations hardly one wage-worker in fifty has any voice in deciding the course of that Government which may send him to battle to be killed in its support. In the trade unions not one man in twenty has the right of the ballot. The Church and the State have not been separated in their spheres, as in the United States. The compulsory military service calls from the working-men the bitterest of cries; those too poor to obtain the higher education must serve three years; the fortunates who have their way paid through college serve but one year. The landed proprietors, the aristocrats of the nation, rule in law-making. "With regard to landed property," said one of my informants (a literary man), "we are in the condition of France before her Revolution." "With regard to child labor," said a public-spirited employer, "we are in the position of England prior to 1830." "With regard to social reform," said a radical, "Hungary is in the general condition that Germany was when Marx made his outcry against the starvation of the proletariat, and tried to forecast the economic methods of a better future."

The Government seems to have no clear policy for



## THE BUDAPEST HOD-CARRIER

bringing the country up to modern standards. "A million Hungarians are in America," one man told us, "and their going has helped the masses at home but little. The millions of crowns sent home yearly by the emigrants find their way to the enrichment of the classes already having possessions, for the poor to whom the money is sent have to part with it in buying the necessities of life."

The trade unions have now a policy, fully adopted last year, in advance of their previous ideas. They have resolved to keep the partisan political movement entirely apart from the union movement, which is to be conducted only by men working at their trades. Two attempts at general strikes, the first in some respects partly successful, the second a dismal failure, have convinced the leaders of the necessity for providing well beforehand for possibly successful limited strikes. The new Hungarian trade-union movement may help the American movement. Heretofore unorganized Hungarian miners and cigarmakers have gone to the United States in large numbers as strike breakers. Efforts are now being made to organize these workers and improve their conditions at home.

In politics, five distinct parties have members in the Reichsrath. "All five are opposed to us," said one of the working-men. "The Social Democratic party has not a single member. But by some name the working-people intend to be represented, though the conditions of suffrage are worse now than ten years ago." When in a railway train our party was passing a penitentiary, this man said, pointing to it:

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

"In that building are robbers, murderers, and Socialists." Well, what American animated by the spirit of '76 would not qualify himself quickly for prison in such a country as Hungary—and do it under the name of Socialist if necessary?

The depressing facts which I have recorded in this letter were not obtained from some "perverted" mind, rendered so by prejudice, hatred, or revenge. Most of the oral information communicated to me came from a legal practitioner of high standing in the community and a representative of an association of employers in one of the leading industries of the country. Their testimony was supplemented by that of a large employer of labor and the careful statements of several of the foremost intelligent and trustworthy labor men of Hungary. Added to these are results of my own observations and of inquiries made of workers themselves.

## MUNICH A MODEL TRADE-UNION CENTER

VENICE, *August 20, 1909.*

FROM Budapest, our farthest point east in Europe, we journeyed north and west to Munich by fast express. The trip took sixteen hours. It gave me my first experience with European sleeping-cars. None of our party slept! But the particulars of this journey I shall reserve for a paragraph in a future letter, which I shall devote to some curious drawbacks incident to travel in Europe as seen from an American labor point of view.

Munich, less than a day from Budapest, is so far in advance of the latter in social development that one must expect radical changes in Hungary before the two cities can possibly stand on the same level. With respect to the political rights and the education of its citizens, all my informants concurred in describing Munich as in no way second to any other place in Germany. Officials connected with institutions for the protection or assistance of the poor offered the evidence of their volumes of reports to show that nothing was left undone in their departments. In trade unionism the local labor representative men held that Munich leads not only all Germany, but every other city on the European Continent.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

In May, 1894, the total number of union members represented in the Central Union of Munich was only 4903; in December, 1908, it had increased to 54,425. The significance of these figures affords good reason for quoting the statistics on the same point for some of the intermediate years: 1895, 7981; 1897, 8563; 1900, 17,275; 1905, 36,522; 1906, 47,355. In 1894 only 75 wage workers per 1000 were organized; in 1900, 275 per 1000; in 1908 the great majority in all skilled trades were in the unions, in some of which the proportion organized reached from 90 per cent to nearly 100.

These figures indicate the adoption of the trade union within the last fifteen years by the masses in a city where for a generation they had been taught not to look for help through its operations. In this regard Munich has the same story to tell as Hamburg, Berlin, and the other large industrial cities of Germany. Consequently, all the impressions that were gained and recorded by American sociological observers in Germany fifteen or even ten years ago must be thoroughly corrected in order to represent the present situation. The works written by German or American publicists only five years ago, describing the status of labor in Germany and forecasting the probabilities as to the directions to be taken in social expansion, possess little of the value the authors might have imparted to their volumes had publication been deferred until now. The very considerable number of German working-men who went to the United States a decade or more ago with convictions based

## MUNICH A MODEL UNION CENTER

on the theories then most popular in Germany, and who are now interested in social movements in America, are not directing their energies to the highest profit if they have not kept in touch with the recent rapid changes in sentiment and activities among the wage workers in Germany. With the evidence of the solid benefits arising from practical work, the German industrial working-men are now taking the time to discuss immediate actualities which was once given to remote abstractions. With new subjects for their debates and their reading, new purposes have arisen before them for their common efforts. Whereas formerly parliamentarism almost completely absorbed their attention, at present their minds are more frequently directed to wage scales and the shortening workday, to trade agreements between employers and employed, and to the great fact that no matter what the law-makers may be doing, they themselves have now sufficient liberty of association to manage the sale of their labor power collectively. For competition in the labor market they have substituted unity.

These points were so often brought to my observation in Munich that I can have no hesitation in accepting them as generally true for the whole city. Moreover, whether showing me the advanced rates in the printed scales of wages or informing me of the change in general public sentiment toward the labor movement, the labor leaders declared that the great special improvements in the condition of Munich's working-people had come through trade unionism, "and no other agency." This assertion was made even by

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

men prominent in the party. It was repeated by higher officials in the Munich Municipal Labor Exchange (*Städtisches Arbeitsamt München*).

This labor exchange of Munich I visited, though not in expectation that anything could be seen very different from those exchanges in other European cities, at which enforced idleness and undeserved poverty are to be seen humbly seeking some footing in society on the basis of paying its way in work instead of being driven to pauperism. Usually the officials had seemed to be going about their work in a perfunctory manner; the horde of applicants for work had the appearance of being desperately poor; and the waiting-halls were repellent to every sense, especially that of smell. But the Munich exchange turned out to be a model of its kind. It was noticeably clean. Every one of the halls, all light and airy, looked as if washed up daily. The seekers for work were classified, skilled or unskilled, the former as to trades, and kept apart in a dozen separate halls. The inspectors were sufficient in number to permit the hiring of the men or the women to proceed speedily. The manner of the officials toward the applicants indicated a disposition to assist instead of to overawe. The chief inspector and his first assistant, who showed me over the building, exhibited an unmistakable interest in their work. On talking with a number of men waiting to be engaged, we found that nearly all of them had been out of work only a very brief time. They were a clean-looking lot. They seemed cheerful, and to be quite confident of finding employment soon. In the women's

## MUNICH A MODEL UNION CENTER

halls care was given to keeping the applicants of different occupations apart; there are fine distinctions in the social grades of the female workers, which must be observed if the exchange is to perform its best service. In the domestic department was a room with a dozen recesses in which, seated at a little table, mistress and maid might make those minute arrangements which so much occupy the minds of both before the new girl is taken into the household.

Of mere description of waiting-rooms, bureaus, and management more or less may be given of the labor exchanges of Germany and Austria that must read much the same, but to be able to say that the ideas of the projectors have been carried out to almost the point of perfection is a rare thing.

The Munich labor exchange, like all the others we had visited, seemed to be rather top-heavy with functionaries. What an endless filling out of blanks there seemed to be, with the checking up of one point and another in great ledgers, and the making out of statistical tables that filled pages. I was shown the shelves of a library thick with books and the closets containing the archives of the institution. Every book and pamphlet was classified, catalogued, and stood up or filed away in its proper place. Curious to obtain an illustration of the certainty with which the seeker for knowledge might get just the particular point he wanted, I asked to see the documents on the "United States" shelf, and especially in its "Labor" division. The case was opened up, with all the diverse contents elaborately labelled. Forth came a

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

London pamphlet on the English Compensation Act and a circular from the Connecticut Bureau of Labor relating to the tariff; date, ten years ago! In looking into their compartments through the brass bars and wirework partitions at the docile pen-drivers in the public bureaus of various departments in Germany, I have more than once wondered what they were doing so patiently and to what practical effectiveness their seemingly tedious labors led. I cannot say now that I know, but at least the suspicion is justified that their checking, balancing, counting, recording—all executed in handwriting quite faultless and in forms established by law—might be reduced by nineteen-twentieths with the world none the loser. There's little of such work done in the big railroad offices of America. But the railroads are run.

When leaving the exchange the labor committeemen with me said that the skilled trades of Munich usually maintained their own exchanges or labor bureaus, where employers could find whatever workmen they needed. At that moment I observed seated on a park bench four men whose garb would have qualified them to "go on" in a stage act as Tyrolese singers. Their little cocked-up hats were adorned with a feather at the side or a brush at the back; they wore vari-colored shirts and vests, and velveteen or leather knee-breeches. On questioning them they said they had come from Eastern Austria to Munich looking for work, and were already inscribed at the municipal labor exchange as applicants in their respective callings. Certainly the labor bureau as a



## MUNICH A MODEL UNION CENTER

Government agency becomes a puzzling question the more one learns of what it does and what it cannot do. Uniformly I had found that in all cities it is of little value, not only to the higher-paid artisan class but to the numerous and increasing body of well-organized workers. Here in Munich I now found it smoothing the way for laborers of another nation to compete with Munich's own people while its services were ignored by the skilled trades.

One important fact, however, I was carrying away from the bureau. It was the assurance from its chief that nothing had ever had the same influence on the wage situation in the city as the trade unions. Since their rise they had advanced wages, which was, of course, expected; but what was of almost equal social weight, they had made wages steady. There could now be said to be a prevailing rate—*viz.*, that of the unions, to which even the pay of the non-unionists tended to approximate. But formerly there was no rate; the wages of the very poor depended on the degree of their necessities when hiring and the disposition of the employers to drive a hard bargain. Moreover, the officials stated, the trade unions contributed in making work steady. In the building trades, for example, before the day of the labor organizations, work went on with a rush for a brief season in the summer, every workman to be found far and wide being engaged. But before and after this short period the out-of-works numbered thousands. Now that the unions have won shorter hours and other rights of a party to a bargain no longer one-sided, building goes on quite

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

steadily, and where possible the year round, with resultant benefit to all who are engaged in any occupation connected with the industry.

The labor committeemen with us thought it quite American that we should halt and talk with the four Austrians in the park, and get from them the facts as to their coming to Munich and reporting at the labor bureau. The accepted German method of social investigation seems to be thumbing over a Government report made up in the bureaus. And our committeemen were very good in quoting from such official documents. They told us that the present population of Munich is nearly 600,000, that the number of industrial establishments falling under factory inspection (those using motor power) is about 11,000, employing more than 80,000 persons, 17,000 being women. In the handicrafts not well organized the number of workmen is comparatively inconsiderable. In Munich the general level of wages is as high as in Berlin. There is an immigration from Austria and Italy to Munich and Bavaria generally. The Italians, unskilled laborers in building construction and railroad work, have been found almost impossible to organize. From this fact it is to be inferred that the Munich trade unions have not yet learned fully the methods of organizing as practised in the United States. In our country the Italians are taking a place in the unions, as has been done by men of all other European nationalities when they have been brought to understand the good the unions can do for them.

Our party was continuing the discussion of earnings

## MUNICH A MODEL UNION CENTER

and how to increase them during lunch at a hotel, when the landlord volunteered the information that he had worked four years as a butcher in Chicago and in Saginaw, Michigan, and could give us some comparisons as to the cost of living. He said he had had good board in Saginaw at \$4 a week. The cost of meat in Munich for the better grades was nearly double that in Saginaw, and fully 50 per cent more for the poorer. He regarded the meat of Munich, on the average, better than that sold in the rest of Germany, excepting Hamburg. The calves, lambs, and young porkers were "better developed." Fruit in Munich was cheap and good, but lacking in the variety known to America. A general talk about the lunch-table with the local labor committeemen as to cost of dwelling-places brought out these points: No Munich working-man occupies a whole house; the apartment system is general. The highest rent known to be paid for a family of working-people was \$200 a year; two rooms and a kitchen cost \$180; one room and a kitchen, in a poor laborer's quarter, \$87.50. Thousands of families live in Munich in one or two rooms, a kitchen in addition being not always the rule. Being asked what he regarded as the best features of municipal provision for the working-classes, the landlord pronounced in favor of the out-of-work relief and the new tenement-house law. A citizen of Munich not able to find employment is entitled, on subjecting his character and mode of life to the processes of official investigation, to seventy-five cents relief a week. Instantly the skilled tradesmen

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

present declared that never had a man in their various unions taken such relief, and therefore they objected to the ordinance providing for it being regarded as of general benefit. But all agreed that the clearing away of Munich's rookeries in the back streets, with the stipulations as to the grade of building landlords henceforth should provide for working-class tenants, had been excellent municipal improvement work.

I may have stated that on the general subject of housing, cost of living, and public effort to improve the living conditions of the working-people I have a considerable collection of data. It can be given, as it relates to the various cities visited, in the future in one chapter—to be read by those who like statistics. Meantime, however, perhaps some of my readers may believe, as I do, that much light may be thrown on public questions from the impromptu delivery by men of fair intelligence of facts as they see them. Hence my reference to the landlord's views, as revised on the spot by some of his hearers.

A visit to the quarter that once was Munich's worst brought to view a good many old houses—most of them standing apart from any others, however, those formerly between them having been torn down. Light and air and playground space for the children had thus been given to the occupants of the houses remaining. Cleanliness, both of the houses and the streets, had also been made possible; the entire district appeared fairly well cared for, both by the residents and the authorities. "There's nothing disgraceful in an old house," we all agreed. "Given

## MUNICH A MODEL UNION CENTER

hygienic conditions, and absence of the nuisances and infamies of congestion, and a quarter made up of old houses may be no more objectionable than a half-finished new district." "Very true," quoth one of our attendant committeemen, "and there's nothing degrading, even for women, in an honest occupation. Now, those lusty women who clean Munich's streets day and night, and act as switchmen for the electric cars. They are engaged in healthful work, they are paid the same as men, and you must grant that, with their municipal uniform Alpine hats and short skirts, they are very picturesque." "Aye," came from another, "work is somewhat like the boycott: for its respectability it depends on who carries it on. Now, there's that boycott at present enforced by half-a-dozen societies of hotel landlords, as well as theatre and concert-garden musical directors, on that firm of publishers which is trying to collect royalties on the music it publishes. That's a boycott publicly advertised. But the brewery teamsters might not have so easy a time in boycotting an unfair brewery." And thus our conversation reconciled us—some of us—to living in an old house, to outdoor city work for women, and the boycott as a social institution.

On the whole, the tourist cannot be impressed otherwise than favorably with Munich. The central districts of the city, reached in a short walk from the fine railway station, are most attractive. They have many handsome public buildings, beautifully kept parks, and wide and clean streets, several of which are lined with shop-windows that would do credit

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

to Paris and that rival the picture-galleries as magnets to American travellers. The stone-walled embankments of the swift, narrow Iser form a popular promenade, along which are imposing apartment-houses. To the south of the river is an elegant suburban district, stretching away toward the country. Really, the fine neighborhoods of Munich seem to spread over fully three-fourths of the area of the city. In the other fourth dwell most of the workers, in swarms, one, two, or three rooms to the family, in big barracks-like houses. Thrifty and respectable working-people they must be, so as not to degenerate into a slum life in their contracted dwelling-places. From the character of its people in general, and from the excellent organization of its wage workers, one may be led to expect Munich to move along in the van toward that higher civilization for all which ought to be swiftly approaching.

It was in pleasant reflections such as these that I found myself engaged when about taking a train at the Munich station on the morning of my departure. Yes, here was a fine modern city, with many of the characteristics of an advanced civic life. One feels the better for visiting such a place—progressive, public-spirited, up-to-date. "What's that you say?" I asked one of our labor committeemen, coming out of my dream. "There's not enough cars to your train for the number of passengers!" This word seemed to have been transmitted telepathically along the crowd that lined the station platform. At once a pandemonium! Porters and passengers laden with

## MUNICH A MODEL UNION CENTER

hand-baggage dashed for the train as it backed in. There was a struggle at every car door. Shouts, gesticulations, football rushes! A porter, running wild, struck one of the ladies of my party violently with a heavy valise that dangled among others from his shoulders. One of our German committeemen sped after him and dealt him a blow. My party became separated, to find standing-room or the poorest seats finally in different cars. The train moved out of the station with men and women in every compartment—first, second, or third class—angry, anxious, in a fault-finding mood. The day was hot; the passengers sweltered; the trainmen were out of humor. The Americans—those among them who could make themselves understood—were denouncing the railroad company and telling their neighbors how incomparably better the transportation service was in America on any through train, such as this from Munich to Verona. “But don’t berate ‘the railway company,’” said one of the passengers. “In this country the railways are owned and managed by the ‘State.’ The service usually breaks down in the busy season. You needn’t to expect any improvement.”

All of which suggested reflections on the standards of civilization in America as compared with the standards in Europe, especially in regard to the conveniences of living and travelling. But—that’s another letter.

## THE SWISS LABOR MOVEMENT—A DAY IN COLOGNE

PARIS, Monday, *August 30,* 1909.

SINCE writing my letter of ten days ago in Venice I have made brief visits, in passing, to Milan, where I saw the great cathedral; to Chamonix, whence I viewed Mont Blanc; to Montreux, there seeing the paradise of Lake Geneva and the surrounding Alps; and I have stopped over for a day each in Berne, Basel, and Cologne—at the latter place concluding a trip down the Rhine from Mayence.

In Paris again, after a six-weeks' absence on my flying tour over a large part of Continental Europe, I find myself in possession of printed and other data which to read and digest fully would require at least six months. But these letters are not intended to record my conclusions on thorough observation and reflection, but rather my impressions of the moment as to social conditions and the tendencies of the European labor movement.

In Berne, as had been the case in other cities visited, I was taken in hand by trade-union representatives, who showed me about the city and explained the labor situation in their country. The national unions of Switzerland have a building of their own in Berne, a fine five-story stone house in a good neighborhood,



## THE SWISS LABOR MOVEMENT

in which there are the usual meeting-rooms and the offices of the national secretaries. As I have already mentioned, these central trade-union buildings in European cities have the appearance, and the employes in the suites of offices a good deal of the air, that we in America associate with the headquarters of big corporations.

The labor situation of Switzerland has peculiar features. A considerable part of the country's industrial operations is carried on in the rural districts, the employes working on their own little strips of land during the short farming season of the summer, and in the factories or other industrial establishments the rest of the year. The product of their agricultural labors is not sufficient to maintain them, and their earnings as employes are not enough to induce them to part with their little land and become once and for all a part of the industrial army. Their usual hope, I was told, is to save what money will buy them a little more land. But that disappointment in regard to this is common is seen in the fact that the movement from country to city is steady in Switzerland, much as it is in other countries. The Swiss Secretary of Labor, in a recent publication, shows that from 1850 to 1900 the combined population of forty country districts has fallen off from 476,965 to 431,417, a decrease of more than 45,000. In 1850 these districts contained 19 per cent of the Swiss people; in 1908, only 13 per cent. On the other hand, in the same period the nineteen Swiss cities having more than 10,000 inhabitants have increased from a combined population of 152,819 to

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

742,205. However, to the American, accustomed to seeing the methods of agriculture on a large scale at home, it is rather surprising that the Swiss peasants do not emigrate in large numbers to a country where their habits of thrift and industry and knowledge of cultivating the soil would yield them better results. Their own mountain land is under snow most of the year; its steep hillsides and Alpine heights do not permit the use of field machinery. Consequently, the work has to be carried on by primitive methods. As I came along through green valleys the hay crop was being harvested—by all the members of the household usually—with scythe or sickle and hand-rake.

While well-established unions have existed for decades in a score of trades in Switzerland, the General Federation on a purely economic basis has been but recently founded. The mingled political and trade-union movement, which so long influenced the masses, brought about extremely unsatisfactory results. In French Switzerland continual political dissension drove out of the unions many of their adherents, while others joined the so-called Christian unions, and still others took up with the Anarchist unionists, whose chief tenets are the general strike, "direct action," and anti-militarism; in fact, at present it seems that the Anarchists have the lead in the French-speaking Swiss labor organizations. Against them much of the writing in the Socialist and federated union press is directed.

The short standing of the present national Swiss labor movement, which is on the plan of the American

## THE SWISS LABOR MOVEMENT

Federation of Labor, is indicated in the fact that the organ of the metal workers, the strongest of the unions, is only in its eighth year of publication, while that of the workers in alimentary products and that of the federated national unions (*La Revue Syndicale*) are in their first year.

An obstacle to the national organization of trade unions (*l'Union Suisse des Fédérations Syndicale*) is the existence of the "local labor union." In this body are mingled men of any trade or business or profession who wish to become members, together with the local unions of the regular trade organizations. Commenting on the disadvantages of such an association, the July *Revue Syndicale* says it is "the arena of the champions of local politics." Strikes are therein precipitated and boycotts instituted despite the wishes of the national unions directly interested. A ceaseless fight has also been waged in them against the assessments, the officials, and the benefit features of the federated unions. Further: "Certain politicians of the locality profit so much from the 'local labor union' as a source of power that the wage workers get disgusted with the movement" and "quit the devil to fall into the arms of his grandmother." The *Revue*, in its article, describes these combinations of all sorts of people in the "local union" as promoting strikes without considering their effect, and, contrary to the advice of the federated committees affected, of issuing numerous subscription lists, of voting assessments to support strike and similar movements long after their failure.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Neither the regular local union secretaries nor the editors of the local labor press could do other than please those politicians in power. This description of the outcome of the indiscriminate mixing up of all kinds of alleged social reformers ought to be interesting to those American semi-unionists and semi-politicians who are dissatisfied with the American labor movement as it exists. And it has its welcome lessons also to the trade unionists who are satisfied that their course is the right one.

In one of the Swiss labor papers, a correspondent writing from Martigny takes note of the efforts of several of the leaders in religious circles to form a local "Christian trade union." He adds: "The working-class is divided into Catholic, Protestant, Liberal, and Socialist trade unions." The clergy who promote the Christian trade unions defend their course by showing that the Socialists, who have sought, often with success, to rule the unions, are opposed to the Church. Significant, this state of affairs, too!

! The activity of the boycott in Switzerland was noticeable. A large tobacco factory was asking for a treaty of peace with organized labor and a trade agreement, in consequence of a boycott that had diminished its output month by month for several years. Regarding another article under boycott, *L'Alimentation* printed this paragraph: "We recommend to all our comrades not to purchase it, and to promote the boycott upon it in the cafés, barber shops, etc." The labor press of the country is united

## THE SWISS LABOR MOVEMENT

on this one subject, if on no other. In Switzerland there are twenty trade-union organs printed in German, six in French, and three in Italian, one co-operative organ in French, German, and Italian each, and twelve political labor newspapers in German, two in French, and two in Italian.

Of course, no traveller can pass through Switzerland without having his attention attracted to its hotel "industry." The labor press has its opinions as to the way it is carried on. Mentioning the fact that in 1905 the little country had more than nineteen hundred hotels, with a total of one hundred and twenty-five thousand "beds," the *Revue Syndicale* deplores the situation of the hotel waiters, especially as their character as men is concerned. "Self-respect, honesty, love of liberty, and the sentiment of personal dignity"—all that comes to an end. "Instead of learning useful labor—that is, a good trade—thousands of intelligent young men become hotel messengers, bootblacks, porters hanging about railway stations, and kitchen assistants." "Our conclusion is that the hotel industry has but increased our dependence on foreign countries."

While the Swiss do not emigrate except in small numbers, the considerable immigration into Switzerland is indicated by the census of its members by nationalities taken by the Swiss Federation of Metalworkers in 1907, when it had 17,824 members. Of these 12,925 were Swiss, 2,692 Germans, 265 French, 651 Austro-Hungarians, 862 Italians, and 426 of other nations; that is, nearly 30 per cent were foreigners.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

✓ Throughout Continental Europe the "metal-workers'" union takes in a score of occupations for which we have different unions in America—locksmiths, tin-workers, blacksmiths, boilermakers, cutlers, puddlers, molders, foundry laborers, machinists, watchmakers, jewellers, etc. The general level of money wages is indicated by the fact that 400 of 2,350 union metal-workers in Zurich work nine hours a day, and the rest nine and a half hours, and that among 1,119 of them the average wages is a little more than twelve cents an hour.

In Basel I spent an interesting half day in the company of representatives of the co-operative movement and in the International Association to Promote Labor Legislation. For the city of Basel the number of members in the local co-operative society averages nearly one for each family. The labor legislation just at present chiefly engaging the attention of the association named is uniform laws for the protection of women and children.

Cologne I found to be rather behindhand as compared with other German cities in general movements for working-class welfare. But it has within a few years taken a start in a purely labor movement—and put it on its feet firmly—that promises a progressive development. No more satisfactory interviews in this respect have I had with trade-union leaders anywhere in Europe. And it came about in a most unexpected manner. Cologne was on my itinerary only for a brief stop, and the men of labor were unaware that I was going to drop in on them. After a rather cursory "peep" into some of the home and working

## THE SWISS LABOR MOVEMENT

conditions, I soon found the labor headquarters. While climbing the massive stone stairs up to the third story (they have few elevators in office buildings in Europe), I mentioned my mission to a man who was preceding me. He recognized me, and greeted me cordially. He proved to be the secretary of the local wood-workers' union, a well-informed and intelligent man. He invited me into his well-appointed office, and was glad to impart all possible information in connection with labor conditions and the struggles which the unions have had and still have with employers as well as the leaders of the Socialist political party. His views on the last-named subject can best be given in his own words. "We have," said he, "the same contentions in Germany that you have to a lesser degree in America with the leaders of the Socialist party. I noticed the attacks on you in the Berlin *Vorwärts* and *Neue Zeit*, and the Leipzig *Volks-Zeitung*. But what of that? These Socialist papers are edited, as the party is led, not by working-men, but by so-called 'intellectuals,' professors and others of the same sort, who know nothing of the real life, the conditions, and struggles of the workers. These writers and leaders? Why, we are in constant strife with them in defending the trade-union movement from their meddling and attempts at domination. The same bitter tactics that they have displayed toward you they employ toward Carl Legien [the President of the German Trade Union Federation]. Why? Because he dares to stand true to the trade-union movement in defence of and for the advance-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

ment of the workers' interests. These writers consult their books, and are blinded by their theories. In a word, the difference between them and us is they are in the clouds while we are on terra firma." He called attention to the fact that in nearly every trade in Germany there exist three or four antagonistic national trade unions, each of which issues an official weekly paper opposing the true unions of labor. "These facts," added my informant, "as well as the organization of the employers, compel us to pursue the common-sense methods of making the best efforts not only to organize the workers, but also to unite the unions in one comprehensive movement." He added much useful information of equal value relating to the growing independence of the German labor movement with regard to political-party domination.

Then I met the secretaries of the metal-workers' and of the typographical unions. The former has compiled and published an excellent pamphlet on the housing conditions of his fellow-craftsmen, which, according to him, are miserable and degrading. One of his criticisms of official opinion and action is especially noteworthy. He declares that the Cologne official conception of working-class overcrowding begins only "when more than six persons live in one room, and more than eleven persons in two rooms." What a commentary on civic duty—on civilization!

The Secretary of the Cologne Typographical Union having invited me to visit the office of the *Daily Zeitung*, I accompanied him, rather for the purpose of making inquiries of him on the way than in ex-



## THE SWISS LABOR MOVEMENT

pectation of seeing anything unusual in a printing-office. But I did see something extraordinary. This extraordinary thing was not the cleanliness, the extreme tidiness of every room in the building, hardly a bit of paper being seen lying on the floors anywhere. Nor was it in the high polish of the granite stairway walls, nor the mosaic flooring, nor the lockers for every one of the employes, nor the excellent arrangements for light and ventilation. In every department the equipment was new looking, and every bit of it, I was assured, was a model of its kind, and every kind to be seen was the latest. But all this could not be called extraordinary. We have some fine printing-offices in every city of the United States. But what our big country has not, and is not likely soon to have, the Cologne *Zeitung* has. It has one hundred and thirty-one hand compositors in its composing-rooms, and not one composing-machine. A ✓ corps of healthy and intelligent-looking men it is that gets out the *Zeitung* and the books and other newspapers it prints. There they stand, upright, at the type-cases, lifting letter by letter, just as we used to see men in the newspaper offices in America twenty years ago, setting up the news and the editorials and the advertisements. And there's not a typesetting-machine in any daily newspaper office in Cologne! Well, the men report themselves satisfied, the manager told me he was satisfied, and why shouldn't we Americans be satisfied? And satisfied, also, may be the economist who wishes to illustrate his doctrine that comparatively high wages do not certainly imply

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

a comparative high cost of product. My authentic information is that the compositors working on the New York morning newspapers have a minimum of \$31 per week, time-work; the compositors of the Cologne *Zeitung* earn, at piece-work, \$12.50 and upward—not very far upward. A machine compositor on a New York paper will turn out four times the product of a compositor on the Cologne *Zeitung*.

On my arrival in Paris I saw a large gathering of men in front of the "Bourse du Travail," and learned that the bricklayers were out on a strike—sixteen thousand of them. In a few hours I had a lengthy conference at a meeting with the ten members of the Executive Committee who are charged by the men with the leadership of the strike. The committee quite readily gave me the reasons for the dispute. The men demanded the abolition of the "sweaters" and sub-contractors, the nine-hour day, an increase of five cents an hour, and a regular settlement day for their wages—once a month. The men and their leaders express confidence in the success of their movement—at least, in securing an improvement in existing conditions. The hours of labor for the bricklayers up to the present have been ten per day—minimum. And yet theorists and faddists in Europe and even in the United States insist that American workers' unions are too conservative and reactionary. What is the answer? By their fruits shall ye know them. Our building trades have the eight-hour day, the Saturday half-holiday, and wages double or treble those paid in European countries.

## AT THE PARIS CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

PARIS, *September 3, 1909.*

THE sixth "International Conference of the Secretaries of National Trade Union Centers" was held in Paris on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the present week. The association of these officials is usually referred to as the "International Secretariat."

The first conference, held in Halberstadt in 1900, was followed by others—at Stuttgart (1902), Dublin (1903), Amsterdam (1905), and Christiania (1907). From 1904 until the present year the General Confederation of Labor of France abstained from co-operation with the Secretariat, but rejoined recently and paid up back dues. As a mark of acknowledgment, the present conference was held in Paris, and as the President of the American Federation of Labor was to be on the Continent this year the date was made for 1909 instead of 1910.

The list of the representatives present tells of itself a story to the initiated who are watching the tendencies of the international labor movement. The General Federation of Trades of Great Britain sent W. A. Appleton, its secretary, and Allen Gee, of the textile workers—this federation, it will be remembered, being the one concerned in bringing the British unions to-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

gether for mutual support in time of strikes or lock-outs, its total membership now seven hundred thousand. France sent L. Jouhaux, the new General Secretary of the *Confédération du Travail* (known commonly as the "C. G. T."), and Georges Yvetot, the popular orator of that body, both champions of the general strike, "direct action," anti-militarism, and anti-parliamentarism. Their opponents refer to them as Anarchists. Holland sent J. Oudegeest, of Amsterdam, a Socialist member of the House of Representatives and a committeeman of the diamond workers' union. From Belgium came Camille Huysmans, General Secretary of the International Socialist Secretariat, whose headquarters are in the *Maison du Peuple*, Brussels, and J. Bergmans. Germany's representatives were C. Legien, President of the General Commission of the German trade unions and Secretary of the International Trade Union Secretariat as well, and J. Sassenbach, Secretary of the German National Saddlers' Union and librarian of the General Commission. Austria sent A. Hueber, of Vienna, Socialist member of the Austrian House of Representatives and Secretary of the national "centre" of trade unions, and F. A. Jura, of Moravia. Italy's chief representative was Rinaldo Rigola, of Turin, Secretary of the Italian General Confederation of Labor, recently a Socialist member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies; the other being J. Quaglino, Secretary of the Italian national building trades unions, also of Turin. Others present as representatives were: Denmark—C. F. Madsen and C. Cran, Copenhagen; Nor-

## THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

way—Ole O. Lian, Christiania; Hungary—S. Jazsai, Budapest; Croatia—W. Bukseg, Agram; Switzerland—J. Huggler, Berne; Spain—Vicente Barrio, Madrid. A representative from Roumania, M. Racovsky, was given a seat without a vote, though Secretary Legien had said he was without information as to the status, or even existence, of trade unions in Roumania, or as to whether M. Racovsky lived in that country or in Paris. This gentleman, I am told, spoke French with a Gallic accent. Servia and Finland, while connected with the Secretariat, were unrepresented, as was also Sweden, on account of its general strike.

The question as to whether the American Federation of Labor was formally represented in the Conference came up after the reading of the secretary's reports. Mr. Legien then said he was authorized to make inquiries on this point. Was the adhesion of the American representative final, or would the American Federation of Labor retire if the conclusions of the Conference were not according to its liking?

In reply, Samuel Gompers said that the American Federation of Labor is the working-class movement of the continent of America; that it desires to come into closer relations with the working-class movement of Europe and all civilized countries. One thing, however, was to be understood: every country is to decide upon its own policy, tactics, and tendencies. In every way possible the unions of America promote an international solidarity. It was from the American Federation of Labor that first came the suggestion of May 1st as a European labor day.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

The cards of established trade unions of European countries are accepted by many of the American unions. An obstacle to America's representation in the Conference hitherto was the antagonism shown in America to trade unions by those who would have the policy, tactics, and general methods of the American working-class movement submitted to the censorship or decision of men knowing nothing of American conditions. Several years ago the suggestion was made from America that, just as fraternal delegates are sent to the British Trade Union Congress, there might be sent delegates to an international meeting—a method that would avoid the exclusiveness of a Secretariat. The speaker was at present in Europe in response to an invitation from the British Parliamentary Committee to attend the coming Congress at Ipswich, and the occasion was seized by the Denver convention of the American Federation of Labor last November to authorize him to attend the present Conference. He had not been elected as a delegate. The propositions appearing in the *agenda* as coming from America, he had regarded, when writing them in his letters to Mr. Legien, as simply suggestions. He could not say what action the American Federation of Labor would take at its next convention in regard to joining the Secretariat formally. In the proceedings thus far he had neither voted nor spoken on any question before the Conference.

That this exact statement of the conditions under which the speaker was in attendance was distasteful to certain of the secretaries present was immediately

## THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

shown in rejoinders made by Mr. Hueber, of Austria, and Mr. Oudegeest, of Amsterdam. Mr. Hueber declared he knew beforehand what was to be expected. What "Comrade — pardon, 'Colleague' — Gompers" had said was, in effect, that he would not join the International Secretariat. No doubt this was in conformity with his "constructive politics." Why should Gompers come here with stories about the struggles in America? Each delegate present might do the same. He had come in the character of mentor, to give advice. The speaker thanked him, but veterans were in the Conference who knew as much about the social struggle as he did. It was regrettable that the advice of Gompers should be welcomed by the American employing class. In concluding, he doubted the existence of the understanding between America and foreign unions, by which the former accepted members of the latter by card. He had heard nothing but complaints of the actions of American unions in this respect.

Mr. Oudegeest's remarks were to the effect that he regarded it as Mr. Gompers' duty to act as a regular delegate. America would not have sent him otherwise. His resolutions had been made part of the *agenda*. From the International Secretariat was excluded all questions relating to theory; no country need have any fear that its own particular methods should be interfered with. But upon this assertion Mr. Oudegeest threw doubt in the next breath when he spoke of "the class struggles as 'we' understand

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

it," and the duty of Mr. Gompers to use his influence in its promotion.

To these speeches the writer replied that he could not hold himself responsible for the construction placed on his acts by Mr. Hueber. Whatever was possible to Mr. Hueber in Austria, he could not of himself declare the American Federation a party in the International Secretariat. In America the members, not the officers, decide upon such questions. The speaker cited as examples of the acceptance of European membership cards the action of the molders' union, the typographical union, the cigarmakers', brewers', bakers', miners', and window-glass makers' unions. He explained in detail the steps necessary to take in order to have the American Federation of Labor join the Secretariat or a similar body. He would do his best to bring about a good understanding, and, possibly, co-operation.

The result of the discussion, which took up two hours, was that Samuel Gompers was given a seat in the convention, with a right to speak, but without vote. His proposition for the formation of an "International Federation of Labor," to which delegates might be regularly elected, was, as the resolution itself provided, referred to the various countries as a matter to be studied, taken up for discussion, and placed on the program for action by the next conference.

A second subject which brought out an exhibition of the attitude and manner of those in the Conference who believe that theirs must perforce be the world's labor movement, was the recommendation of the



## THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Christiania Conference as to the interchange of trade-union cards. Section (b) reads: "As to the right to benefits and any other advantages of the union, the total amount of subscriptions (dues) paid, and of the time of membership in the late organization will be counted; in no case can a longer time of membership be put down to a member's account than he has been in his late organization." Mr. Hueber made a long speech criticising the English delegates for non-action on this recommendation. He did not ask for their "good will," but proof of solidarity. Had they no report to make why nothing practical had been done in the matter? Mr. Appleton, in reply, explained that the English trade unions had high subscriptions (dues) and important benefit funds, while some of the Continental unions had small subscriptions and no benefit funds. As a great many more Continental workmen went to England than the number of Englishmen going to the Continent, their unions might be bankrupted if they admitted their foreign comrades on the basis recommended in the Christiania resolution. It was a subject that the English local unions must fully discuss; no secretary could impose his will on a union in Great Britain. Some of the English unions—the lacemakers, for example—had treaties with Continental unions with regard to the scale of prices and interchange of cards. The situation in these regards was gradually becoming more satisfactory. To this explanation, Mr. Hueber retorted that if the English wished, they could do better than they were doing; the resolutions

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

of the Conference should have been better received and discussed. England was sending blacklegs to the Continent. Mr. Huysmans said it set his teeth on edge to hear the English and American delegates constantly invoking the principle of democracy in order not to apply resolutions which had been passed. Democracy consisted in the application of decisions arrived at in common. The English reminded the rest of their large numbers; the Germans might, if they wished, do the same. This discussion was next day referred to by the London *Daily News* as "acrimonious" as between the Austrian and the English delegates; but the latter's defence consisted entirely in making, without heat or personalities, a plain statement of fact.

A little while later a third incident occurred to reveal the spirit of intolerance actuating the party whose members believe its "virtues" entitle it to rule. It came just after the Conference had considered and accepted without vote, as a communication, the following suggestion from the American Federation of Labor: "That the International Conference recommends to the trade-union centers of all countries the discussion of the proposition of establishing an International Federation of Labor, the autonomy of the trade-union movement of each country being ordained and guaranteed, the purpose of the federation being for the protection and advancement of the rights, interests, and justice of the wage workers of all countries, and the establishment of international fraternity and solidarity." The French

## THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

delegates introduced a proposition for the transformation of the Conference of Secretaries into an International Trade-Union Congress, with delegates regularly elected, "instead of functionaries," and which should discuss measures already passed upon by the unions interested. Before the proposers had submitted one word of argument in support of their plan, Mr. Hueber rose and read a joint declaration giving the reasons of ten signers why the proposition should be rejected. It was signed by the delegates present from a majority of the countries taking part in the Conference. Mr. Huysmans had written the paper and circulated it among the delegates to obtain signatures. Mr. Hueber added these remarks, among others, which occasioned a long debate: "The holding of a labor congress would be impossible and inopportune. Political action and trade-union action are the two arms put into motion by the will of the proletariat. It was necessary to act with the two arms and to unite the two movements. The working-world, to ameliorate the situation, has certainly need of trade-union action, but it has as a principal support parliamentary Socialism. What end could the International Labor congresses serve, since there are already two International Socialist congresses?" On practical grounds, and without reference to the reasoning of Mr. Hueber, the German and English delegates declined to join with the French in support of the proposition. Many intermediate steps must be first taken, the necessary unity in labor's ranks being a preliminary condition.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

The French delegates, after declaring that Mr. Hueber's figures of "the two arms of the movement" really did not express his views, but he ought to have said he believed the big Socialist ship was tugging behind it the little trade-union rowboat, withdrew their motion.

While it is not an easy task to condense into a few paragraphs a description of the spirit and attitude of the men assuming to dominate the Conference, it can be said, without possibility of contradiction, that the two divergent tendencies of the labor movement—toward Parliamentary Socialism and toward independent trade-unionism—was not out of the minds of the delegates at any time during the Conference when the probable interests of either side were even remotely at stake. The Paris reporters present in general took it for granted that whatever was said by Hueber, Oudegeest, or Huysmans, as the leaders on one side, was one word for trade-unionism and two for Socialism. After mentioning "the antagonism between the two tendencies in the unions," *La Petite République* thus introduced its description of the incident relative to the proposed International Congress: "Between the C. G. T., representing the purely trade-unionist tendency, exempt of all political action, and the foreign organizations, equally attached to political action and union action, a decisive shock was inevitable, attended on both sides with equal impatience." Mr. Hueber, as the spokesman for the Socialist tendency, was not fortunate enough in his bearing and oratory to secure the good will

## THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

even of some of the Socialist reporters. *L'Humanité*, of which Jean Jaurès, the Socialist leader in the Chamber of Deputies, is editor, spoke of Mr. Hueber as "responding, not without virulence, to the long and ardent discourse of Gompers." In another instance *La Petite République* referred to Mr. Hueber "protesting with violence," and the *Journal* spoke of his "usual heat." *La Guerre Sociale*, Gustave Hervé's paper, described the voice of Mr. Hueber as "trumpet-like and brutal."

I do not pronounce against the American Federation of Labor sending a delegate to the International Conference of Secretaries; on the contrary, it should be done. But it is well to let Americans, and particularly American trade unionists, have a view of the salient traits of the meeting of the secretaries just held. Nothing is more important than to know beforehand who and what are the usual elements of a convention or conference. As the secretaries above mentioned are the permanent representatives so long as they hold their positions, what is to be expected from them may be seen. In a deliberative body, these are important questions: Are the members open to reason, without prejudice, and willing to change their opinions and course of action according to new evidence and thought? Are they subject to outside influence? Are they accustomed to restrict themselves to the business in hand, and not to impose their views as to foreign matters upon their fellow-delegates? Are they moderate in speech, and in the habit of observing the amenities of debate? Or are

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

they simply using one organization for the upbuilding of another? The question for the American Federation of Labor to decide, relative to joining the Secretariat, is: Even supposing that with respect to several of the International Secretaries the foregoing queries bring a disappointing answer, will it still not be helpful to international trade-unionism to send a delegate to the Conference two years hence? My answer must be an emphatic "Yes!"

The proceedings of the Conference continually reminded the American that he was far from his own country and its institutions. Every speech had to be repeated on the spot in at least three languages. At the opening of the session an hour or more was taken up with the question whether the Press representatives and the public should be admitted. Some of the delegates wanted a continuous executive session. No tables or seats had been provided for the reporters. It is to be hoped that the decision to give the Press men the best seats next the delegates and to admit everybody until the hall should be full came about partly through the American guest's upholding, without taking the floor, the custom of his own land of free speech and entire publicity. An American—the millionaire "hobo," claiming to represent the unemployed of the United States—asked for a seat in the Conference, and invited it to send a delegate to an international conference of the unemployed next year in Chicago, adding that such delegate's expenses would be paid by the aforementioned unemployed! The proposed delegate was not elected.

## THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Mr. Racovsky, representing Roumania, introduced resolutions, which were adopted, condemning the present régime in Turkey, the new constitution completely refusing to give the right of association to the wage workers. The international syndicate for furnishing "strike-breakers" was discussed, and, besides the rubs on this score that England received, the assertion was made by Mr. Jouhaux that a sort of German central labor union existed in Paris, the members of which refused to enter into the French unions. An assistant secretaryship, with a small salary, was established for the Secretariat, as the work of secretary had been previously done by Mr. Legien in odd hours. The total income for the last year had been 8709 marks (less than \$2200). The secretary of the Swedish unions sent a letter regretting his absence, caused by the general strike in his country. Mr. Legien brought to the attention of the Conference the acts of the Prussian Government with regard to "cards of legitimation" for foreign wage workers. At the Prussian frontier an incoming working-man is obliged to pay \$1.30 for the right of entering and 60 cents for an identification card, which he must exhibit on demand of the authorities or his employer. If his card does not show his character as an employe to be satisfactory, he may be sent back to his own country. Mr. Legien said that non-unionism was promoted by these measures, and he thought that the ministers of the governments concerned should be asked to protest to Prussia. Mr. Bergmans, of Belgium, proposed that the Inter-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

national Secretary of the Conference co-operate in the matter with the bureau of the International Parliamentary Socialists. The French delegates objected; they preferred to exert "an exterior pressure" on parliaments. Mr. Yvetot drew the attention of the delegates to the fact that the threat of a strike by the Welsh miners had been necessary two months ago to bring into effect the British eight-hour mine law in their district, and that the laws affecting the intelligence offices of France were a nullity until the unions enforced them. Mr. Appleton's motion that the unions in the various countries represented should combat the Prussian regulations in question "by all means in their power" was adopted. Mr. Madsen, of Denmark, notified the Conference that the working-people of his country intended to enter upon a struggle for the eight-hour day, and asked for material support. Mr. Huysmans moved that work done in homes should be subjected to the same legislation as factory work. Agreed to. Mr. Jouhaux called the attention of the Conference to attacks made by the secretaries of the Holland and Spain central unions on the Anarchists of those countries, and asked that they be requested to abstain from such personalities and political controversies. A warm discussion ensued, the Socialists and their opponents charging each other with introducing politics in the Conference, and consequently sowing the seeds of dissension. "The French," said Mr. Legien, "declare themselves adversaries of politics in the union as against the Socialists; but when it is a matter of Anarchist



## THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

politics, their zeal for the neutrality of the unions vanishes." A proposition in favor of Esperanto was accepted; not obligatory. Budapest was chosen as the place for holding the next Conference some time in 1911.

In thus summarizing the three days' proceedings of this Conference, I have felt—at moments almost with sufficient force to cause me to dismiss the whole subject in a brief paragraph—that my American readers as a body could hardly be expected to follow all the points as narrated. And yet all who are acquainted with our American labor movement—our own, our advanced, our national, more, our continental, movement—will see, at every point touched upon, comparisons favorable to America, both as a land in which the workers are free from many burdens that still rest heavily upon European labor and as a land in which the organized labor movement is in a better position to help all classes of society than is the case in any country in any other part of the world.

## AT THE BRITISH TRADE-UNION CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

IPSWICH, England, *September 11, 1909.*

THE purpose of the annual British Trade-Union Congress is to decide upon the labor measures its Parliamentary Committee shall recommend to the national lawmakers. Many of the subjects discussed at the conventions of the American Federation of Labor—trade jurisdictions, boycotts, lockouts, strikes, dealings between particular unions and employers—do not come up for consideration in the Congress, and consequently the number of resolutions presented are hardly half as many as are introduced in the annual American Federation of Labor conventions. The place of holding the Congress changes from year to year, in order to impart to all parts of the country successively the quickening impulse that comes to a locality with the publicity and interest connected with the event. Ipswich, with 66,000 inhabitants, not a very lively town even from the English point of view, was chosen for this year's Congress for the reason that no such meeting had been held in Central East England since 1894, when one took place at Norwich. The meeting began Monday and closed Saturday.

## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

Present at the Public Hall sessions this week in Ipswich were 495 delegates, representing unions with a membership of 1,701,000. Chairman D. J. Shackleton, of the Parliamentary Committee, acting as President of the Congress, mentioned that among the delegates were 33 Members of Parliament, 26 Justices of the Peace, 1 Mayor, 6 Aldermen, and 18 Councillors. The number of different unions represented was 195, most of them having but 1 delegate, but at the other extreme was the Miners' Federation with 117 and the Weavers with 49. There were 4 women delegates. Fraternal delegates were also present from the Labor Party (J. Keir Hardie), the Co-operative Union, the Board of Trade, the General Federation of Trade Unions, and the American Federation of Labor (B. A. Larger and John P. Frey, with Samuel Gompers as a special representative this year).

The resolutions to be voted on at the Congress, with their amendments, must be in the hands of the Parliamentary Committee a stated time previous to the date of the meeting. Being then printed in the *agenda*, they are published a sufficient time before the week of the debates on them to permit each delegate and his constituents to know what is awaiting the expression of the general will. The resolutions, which are not referred to committees at the Congress, are usually of a type familiar to all who are in the trade-union movement. Some, like that on compulsory arbitration, brought up year after year by their champions, are sure to meet certain defeat.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Others, like that on secular education, encountering strenuous opposition from denominational sources, are adopted by large majorities. As in many other deliberative bodies, the debate is carried on by a comparatively small body of recognized spokesmen for the various elements present. This year the opening session, Monday, was taken up with preliminary formalities, and Saturday with resolutions of courtesy; hence, the real business was gone over in four days, a five-minute limit speech rule being passed the third day.

The drift of British trade-union effort is to be seen in the decisions on certain of the resolutions. The longest debate on Tuesday was on a motion embodying an "emphatic condemnation of any indirect or direct compulsory enlistment of the working-classes into the Territorial forces," and also condemning "the regulations which permit these forces to be used in suppressing trade disputes." This was passed, but an amendment calling for "a citizen army free from military law in times of peace"—the German Socialists' conception of a military organization as a substitute for the standing army—was rejected, 933,000 votes to 102,000. A resolution calling upon the Government to appoint a Minister of Labor with full cabinet rank was passed. A resolution to establish a Labor daily newspaper in London, for which \$750,000 would be needed, was voted down. A resolution was passed calling upon the organized workers "to fall into line with their comrades of other countries to demonstrate on Labor Day, in order to

## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

demand the institution of a legal eight-hour day and to maintain the interests of the working-class generally in the cause of universal peace by the suspension of work on May 1." Prison commissioners were denounced for "putting the work of prisoners on the open market in direct competition with the work of law-abiding citizens." The Government was asked to prevent the exportation of "blacklegs" to foreign countries in time of industrial disputes. The label of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses was indorsed. As heretofore only the British hatmakers have had a label, this move may mean the promotion of the trade-union label in the kingdom on a large scale. The neglect of this weapon in Great Britain by the trade unionists has for years been commented upon by American unionists. The Government's scheme for labor exchanges and the proposition for insurance against unemployment were approved. The Government was appealed to in the matter of evictions by landlord employers during labor disputes. A measure was proposed by which the Government should "consider the propriety of making 'grants-in-aid' to trade organizations supporting their members during periods of slackness by the payment of out-of-work benefits." This was rejected by a small majority, the principal argument against it being that the scheme would hamper trade-union activities, and could not be dovetailed into union administration. The Congress strongly condemned "the provisions of the American copyright acts whereby copyright is refused to any British

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

publication unless the type is actually set up and the whole of the plates are produced in America," thereby "crippling the printing and paper industry" of Great Britain. The Government was asked to reduce the old age pension limit to 60 years, with the abolition of disqualifications contained in the present act. The confiscation of copies of *Justice*, a Socialist paper, at the recent anti-Czar demonstration at Trafalgar Square, was protested against, and also the prohibition of circulating the paper in India. These acts were regarded as "an attack on the freedom of the Press more characteristic of Russian despotism than the government of a professedly democratic country." A resolution which was accepted demanding "electoral reform" contained these among other items: "The payment of Members of Parliament by the State; the holding of all general elections on one and the same day; a more equitable distribution of seats; the abolition of plural voting and university representation; the extension of the franchise to all adults, male and female." Proportional representation was voted down by a large majority. Several resolutions on industrial insurance, which were passed, brought out a forcible presentation of the evils of the system as operated in England. One of the resolutions read: "Having regard to the serious nature of the illegal practices connected with industrial insurance, which have led to widespread gambling in human lives, this Congress calls upon his Majesty's Government to institute an inquiry by means of a royal commission, or a committee, with a view to legislation to prohibit

## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

such illegal practices." The resolution favoring compulsory arbitration, which was lost by an overwhelming majority, began: "That this Congress, recognizing the futility and wastefulness of the strike as a means of settling trade disputes, hereby affirms the principle of conciliation and arbitration in all such disputes, and is of the opinion that the time has arrived in the direction of conferring compulsory powers on the Board of Trade to inquire into any industrial disputes when requested by either party. Pending such inquiry and report, no strike or lockout shall take place." The present Government's budget land clauses were approved as "being in harmony with the expressed policy of former congresses and in accord with the just claims of labor for the taxation of unearned increment and land monopoly and placing the burden according to the ability to pay." A resolution supporting the eight-hour day was mingled in the debate with one "recognizing that unemployment is now permanent in character, in busy as in slack seasons, in summer and in winter, and is common to all trades and industries, consequent upon industry being carried on for private profit," etc.

Flash-light glimpses of the condition of labor in Great Britain in 1909 may be caught in reading statements made by delegates at the Congress, usually in the course of speeches on measures affecting their own occupations. The President of the Congress, referring in his annual address to the Government's land-tax item in the budget, wrote: "The cry of the landlords—that in order to live their lives of pleasure

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

and luxury it will be necessary for them to curtail their expenditure on charitable objects—is one which needs only to be stated to be resented by the people of this country.” C. W. Bowerman, M.P., of the printing trades, said: “A return issued by the Board of Trade not long ago gave statistics regarding the benefits paid by one hundred of the large trade unions for the past ten years, and showed that the accumulated expenditure for unemployed, superannuation, death, emigration benefits, and so on, came to a little under ten million pounds” (\$50,000,000). A. J. Walkden, of the Railway Clerks’ Association, represented railway clerks as working in “unhealthy holes.” “The worst places were in the goods (freight) departments, where night clerks had to work in places which had been occupied by a staff of day clerks. Most of the so-called offices were badly ventilated and artificially lighted, even in the daytime.” Station masters and clerks worked Sundays without payment or equivalent time off. George Lansbury, of the London Unemployed Committee, at a public meeting, stated: “There is work for 15,000 men at the port of London, but there are no less than 25,000 competing for the positions.” H. H. Elvin, of the Clerks’ National Union, gave details of a “public office twenty-five yards square in which there were twenty-five clerks, male and female, constantly employed, a day and a night staff, so that the office was never empty, that it might be sweetened by fresh air. The ventilation was bad, and the only windows looked onto a passage.” R. Smillie, M.P., Miners’ Federation, speaking on



## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

evictions, told of seeing "seven hundred families of miners turned out on the wayside in the depth of winter." At Hensworth an employer owning one hundred houses bought of another owner one hundred more, and then obtaining an eviction order, "turned all the people out." J. Hallsworth, Co-operative Employees, asking that co-operative societies should always pay the union scale, said: "There are societies with trade unionists on the board employing girls of eighteen or nineteen years of age at 2s. 6d. (62 cents) and 4s. 6d. (\$1.10) a week of sixty-five hours." W. J. Davies, supporting a resolution calling for electoral registry reform, remarked: "Last December I left London to take up permanent residence in Nottingham, and I shall have to wait until July of next year before I shall be qualified" (as a voter). W. F. Dawtry, General Secretary of the Steam-Engine Makers' Society (13,000 members, with a bank balance of \$425,000), at a dinner spoke of preferring "that a trade-union congress should deal more with direct trade-union questions." To his mind "there was a tendency for a sort of rivalry between trade unionism and politicians." One like himself hardly knew which side to take. H. Smith, Barnsley miners, supporting better mine regulations, said: "In 1908 fatal accidents in mines (in Great Britain) caused 1,308 deaths, while non-fatal accidents kept 141,851 men incapacitated more than seven days." W. Ross, Paper-Mill Workers, stated that for the quarter of a million factories and workshops there were only two hundred Government inspectors. Councillor Webster, Bleachers, said that some dye-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

works had not received visits from inspectors for twenty years. S. March, London Carmen's Union, advocating licensing all carmen in London, quoted street accident statistics. "In 1891 accidents in the streets of London were 5,500, but with the introduction of motor traffic they rose to 11,800 in 1905, to 14,000 in 1906, and to 17,000 in 1908. It is surprising that the public has not protested against the excessive speed with which motor vehicles are driven and the incompetency of motor-drivers."

Mr. George Edwards, the Norfolk Agricultural Laborers' delegate, made known to the Congress some of the possibilities arising from the new labor organization that was spreading among his class. Although it had been begun only in 1907, there were already one hundred and fifty branches with seven thousand members. He said that the delegates coming from the large centers of industry had no idea of the seriousness of the questions bearing on employment, and especially eviction, from the standpoint of the agricultural laborers. A town worker when evicted might find a shelter in the next street, but a farm laborer could not get one in the same village nor in any of half a dozen near him. From a form of agreement in his hand he read the terms to which a laborer he represented had had to submit. By these the man agreed to give up his cottage at a week's notice; not to keep pigs or fowls without the landlord's permission; to act as night watchman when required; to inform on "poachers"; not to harbor any one of his family "who might misconduct themselves in any

## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

way"; not to remove certain of his utensils until his landlord or the agent refused to purchase them; to "undertake to live at peace with his neighbors, and to lead an honest and respectable life"; to obtain permission of the landlord or agent before admitting to his home any of his family, "giving particulars on a form provided by the landlord, their names and ages, and also if married or single, and how long they want to stay." Laborers who lived under such conditions as he described could neither make application for an allotment of land under the Acts of Parliament nor serve on local boards. If they tried to do such things, they were marked men and turned out of their cottages. Mr. Edwards said his organization had been encouraged by an increase of one shilling a week in consequence of its efforts. Wages usually were twelve shillings (\$3) a week. His union's dues were twopence (4 cents) a week. Mr. Edwards is an interesting personality. Born in 1850, he has been at work as a laborer all his life since six years of age; he never attended a school; once worked with Joseph Arch; is a member of the County Council of Norfolk.

In the course of the week at Ipswich a number of organizations associated to a greater or less extent with the British labor movement took the occasion to hold reunions or propagandist meetings. Two mass-meetings were held in the Hippodrome on Sunday, the first in the afternoon by the Independent Labor Party, which was attended by nineteen hundred persons, according to the local press, and the second in the evening by the National Union of Gasworkers

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

and General Laborers, when the audience numbered sixteen hundred. At the afternoon meeting the speeches, purely socialistic in character, were made by Keir Hardie, George H. Roberts, and Fred Henderson. Mr. Roberts, who is the parliamentary whip of the Labor party, said he was "visiting Ipswich in the dual capacity of a trade-union official and a 'rank-and-filer' of the Labor party." He said: "The total number of wage workers eligible to become members of trade unions is about fourteen million in Great Britain and Ireland, and out of that number some three million belong to trade unions. Not within the recollection of any one present have we seen such crowded years of labor and socialistic legislation as the past three or four have been. There are thirty-four Labor members in the House of Commons to-day, but as sure as I speak to you there will be sixty-five to seventy-five in the next House of Commons." At the evening meeting the salient feature was the Countess of Warwick presiding. On the Saturday previous new headquarters were opened in Ipswich by the local branch of the Labor party; two meetings were held, that of the evening being addressed by three M.P.'s attending the Congress as trade unionists—Pete Curran, J. Seddon, and G. H. Roberts.

In the churches of Ipswich on Sunday sermons were delivered having reference to the Congress. Rev. John Gleeson, speaking in St. Nicholas Congregational Church, welcoming the delegates, said: "There has been a great departure of the masses of the people of this country from the organized churches

## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

of Christendom. In London, out of a population of seven millions, nearly six millions seldom attend a place of worship, and it is much the same in other towns. Various causes had been assigned for this—religious indifference, unbelief, the physical and mental exhaustion of the multitudes, pew rents, snobbery in the churches, and the idea that the churches represented the classes.”

On Wednesday evening the large hall of the Co-operative Society's building was crowded on the occasion of a meeting of the Social Democratic party. The principal speaker was the old-time Socialist, H. M. Hyndman. Ben Tillett made a characteristic address. One of his sallies was the old reference to “those who go to chapel or church to pray for the working-girls on Sunday and prey upon them the rest of the week.” Some of Mr. Hyndman's points, as reported, were: “For two whole generations trade unionists looked at wages and nothing else, and the consequence was they stood in the way of progress.” “The unemployed question went to the very root of modern society. It could not be cured by mere tinkering; but only by recognizing that the workers were under such conditions that they were forced to band themselves together in order to make a clean sweep of a system which was rotten to the core.” “In the matter of poverty, excepting India—which we were robbing, thieving, and ruining—there was more squalor, misery, and horror in proportion to our population in this country than any other in the world”—and he knew it “pretty well.”

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

"The President of the Trade-Union Congress had spoken of the budget as the most glorious budget ever brought in in the history of finance. Well, he could not see anything in it benefiting the working-classes." "As to the proposal to tax land values, . . . it would simply strengthen the capitalist class, which was their worst enemy, for the landlord was only the sleeping partner in the plunder." In conclusion, he prophesied "that the ultimate victory of the party to which he belonged was as certain as the fixture of an eclipse or the return of a comet."

Neither Mr. Hyndman, nor Mr. Hardie, nor Mr. John Turner (our Ellis Island "Anarchist"), nor any of the extremist or moderate M.P.'s present, would find it an easy matter to explain to an outside barbarian how it is that so many shades of Socialism, and so many factions supporting them, exist among the self-styled Socialists, all of whom are so scientifically certain of their own particular future social state. If they could only agree now!

Other side meetings were held in various halls of the town or in the public squares—by the Women's Trade Union League, which now claims a membership of 200,000; by the Catholic Federation, to protest against a resolution submitted to the Congress by the Gasworkers, calling for "a national system of education under full popular control, free and secular, from the primary school to the university"; by the railway men, at which Secretary Richard Bell said there were only eleven members of the union in Ipswich; by the Shop Assistants' Union, a delegate conference at

## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

which nine branches with a membership of 500 were represented; by the Brassworkers and Metal Mechanics, to try to establish a local branch; by officials of the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees, which has a membership of 27,000, with 620 branches and a reserve fund of \$175,000; by the supporters of Ruskin College, Oxford, known as the Workmen's University, at which there has been a strike of students during the last year that threatens serious damage to the institution.

Various meetings such as these brought audiences to the local Trade Union, Co-operative, Social Settlement, and other halls daily. Congress week, it is thus seen, signifies not only the business of discussing prospective labor laws, but the interchange of views and sentiments by many groups of people entertaining all sorts of opinions on labor and reform subjects. To these lesser gatherings the local newspapers give columns of reports, while to the Congress they allot pages. The Press throughout the kingdom devotes much space to Trade-Union Congress events. The occasion affords a stirring-up of ideas, not only among the five hundred and odd delegates and visitors, but among the editors and public men of the entire country. The direction to be taken in national affairs by a large mass of the working-class is determined by the resolutions passed or rejected by the delegates.

The deliberations at the Congress usually move in a decorous groove. The veterans mostly have the floor. Rarely personal in their remarks, they are otherwise guarded in their speech. It was an astound-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

ing thing to happen when Ben Tillett called out, when a Cabinet Minister was mentioned: "Oh, he is a liar!" And when checked by the chairman, he shouted: "All ministers are liars!"

An event of a social character which took place on Monday afternoon, at the close of the opening session of the Congress, rather tended to confuse the American observer, who had been somewhat impressed by the Socialist demonstrations with the idea that only an uncompromising attitude toward "the exploiters" was to be expected from the delegates. The affair was thus referred to in an editorial by the *East Anglican Times*: "Congress rose for the day a few minutes later, and a thousand persons attended a garden-party in Christ Church Park given by the Mayor, the local members of Parliament, and the local Trades and Labor Council. Local employers of labor, the managing directors of great local firms, the Ransomes, the Turners, the Catchpoles, the Prettys, the directing officials of the Great Eastern Company, had accepted invitations, and rubbed shoulders with the representatives of Labor." The same newspaper gave in its local columns a detailed description of this function. Another reception, given on Wednesday afternoon and evening at their residence in Oak Hill Park by Sir Daniel and Lady Goddard, was attended, "on the actual count" of a local reporter, "by nine hundred and eighty-nine persons." "It was quite evident that there was a very general feeling of appreciation of the kindness of Sir Daniel," wrote the reporter, "in entertaining such a number



## AT THE CONGRESS AT IPSWICH

of perfect strangers in so hospitable a fashion." "In addition to the delegates and their wives, all the members of the Ipswich Town Council were invited, and many personal friends of Sir Daniel and Lady Goddard were also present." To the American mind a natural query arises as to the significance of such social receptions. Are they merely political bids for working-class support—the bare suspicion is disquieting—or are they genuine testimony of an inclination on the part of some of the "trustees of wealth" to take upon themselves the public duty of establishing the best relations possible between employers and employed? If the latter is the case, there ought to be some way of systematically bringing together all the elements of Great Britain so interested, irrespective of political, social or religious standing. A long and somewhat heated debate took place on Thursday on a resolution that "invitations to social functions not promoted and organized by a Trades Council or other kindred body shall not be accepted on behalf of delegates to the Congress." It gave opportunity for some railing against the rich and their toadies, but it was rejected—338,000 votes in favor, 1,192,000 opposed.

Sheffield was selected as the place for holding the Congress in 1910.

The general intelligence and sincerity of the delegates to the Congress is beyond cavil. Time will more clearly demonstrate whether the British or the American organized labor movement is the more perfectly adapted to secure the rights and the justice to which the workers are entitled and by which real liberty shall be maintained.

## THE AWAKENING IN ITALY

ROME, *September 20, 1909.* *Monday*

IN the week just passed I have rapidly travelled from Ipswich and London, where the clouds, rain, and chill of the English climate prevail, to Milan and Rome, where to-day are transparent air and glorious sunshine. In both England and Italy my association has been, of course, with people interested in the problems relating to the wage-working class. In London, on Sunday, a week ago yesterday, the day following the close of the British Trade-Union Congress, I addressed a large audience brought together in Browning Hall, Suffolk, by the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Society (the "P. S. A."), under the guidance of Mr. Edward Stead—a very sympathetic audience, but quiet and reserved, which had assembled to hear my message on "Labor," with especial reference to the British Trade-Union Congress, then just closed. In Rome, yesterday, Sunday again, I had three audiences, each of them lively, demonstrative, only short of turbulent, every member apparently bent on testifying in some form to his individual opinion of the proceedings. But both in England and Italy was shown by unmistakable evidence the world-wide interest now taken in the labor question, the labor movement—the problem of the day.

## THE AWAKENING IN ITALY

Leaving London early Tuesday morning, I reached Paris in the evening, took the night train *via* the Basel and Saint Gothard route, and arrived in Milan at three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. On Saturday morning, in the small hours, after another night of uncomfortable railway travel, I reached Rome. At ten o'clock a committee awaited me in the hotel sitting-room; in the course of the day I was called upon to keep seven appointments, and without an hour's rest yesterday I was hurried from point to point to take part in interviews, meetings, and hospitable functions. As I had been carried about in a closed carriage owing to rain, after thirty-six hours I had seen so little of Rome's streets and sights that in this respect I might as well have been in Kalamazoo or Hoboken. What I did see, however, was indeed of importance—gatherings of men of every walk of life manifesting a most lively interest not only in the American labor movement and its relation to Italy, but in American social and industrial development in general. And while I wish to avoid equally an appearance of vainglory and an assumption of false modesty, the fact should be chronicled that as much attention is being given by the Italian public, official and private, to an American labor representative as could be to any spokesman for an equal number of adherents of a cause in any social rank whatever. The newspapers—well, the enterprising Press has shown itself fully alive to the occasion. Columns? Yes, pages!

But to begin Italy with Milan. What a modern

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

city it is, springing out of the old! As the railway centre of rich northern Italy and the commercial capital of the entire kingdom, Milan's annual increase in wealth is quite marked, and through organization labor is on hand claiming more and more of its share—rightfully. At headquarters—the Labor Exchange—nearly one hundred unions are represented. Subdivision of industries, even to the smallest possible distinct sections, seems to be the rule in Milan's organizations. Whereas, in some European cities I have visited a whole industry would be bulked together—as the “metal-workers” or the “wood-workers”—in Milan these are separated into their constituent parts.

Four principal phases of the labor movement are presented to the observer's view in Milan—the trade unions, the co-operative societies, the Socialist party, and the “Umanitaria.” This last-named society has no counterpart, so far as I am aware, in any city in northern Europe. If space permitted, I should dwell upon the possibilities lying before this institution, as well as upon its accomplishments—upon the character of the great man whose generosity provided its foundation, and upon its new building, not entirely finished, in which are to be concentrated the offices of the various officials of trade unions and other organizations devoted to the elevation of labor. According to the statements of prominent union men and others, “Umanitaria” has both the means and the intention to recognize and help promote every legitimate form of social uplifting force that may be

## THE AWAKENING IN ITALY

manifested in Milan. It is the "central" in which all the local avenues of new thought and new deeds in the process of their accomplishing converge.

Only in general terms can the diverse methods of promoting the well-being of the wage workers of Milan be referred to in this letter; the amount of printed matter given me relating to the subject, if condensed, would make a volume which could hardly fail to be interesting. But while the trade unionists of the city are grateful for the assistance and recognition given them by the other forms of organization, they have learned to rely on their unions as the backbone of the general working-class movement. In Italy a separation was declared last year by the trade unions from all other movements, including the political. As in several other European countries, the necessity of discriminating between the purely economic methods of the unions and the theories and methods of the political parties was acted upon. The unions henceforth are to be trade unions, and not party sections; their officials are to be workers at the trade, and not "intellectuals"; the members are to be governed in union matters by their own democratic decisions, and not by votes of delegates at political conventions; each individual union member is to be free in his religion, politics, or other activities, except where his contract with his union is concerned. In other words, in Italy, as in other great countries of Continental Europe, the united wage workers are adopting the well-settled principles of the American Federation

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

of Labor. This necessary work is not complete, but it is proceeding rapidly and effectually.

Before leaving the subject of Milan labor organizations, I must mention the Typographical Union as one of their best examples. It has fourteen hundred members, and there are not more than twenty non-union printers in the city. It has a nine-hour day, with no work Sunday. In its offices, which would do credit to a large business house, the books are kept for the various forms of insurance of the "regional" combination of printers' unions—the north of Italy. And while the typographical is one of the best unions in management, it is by no means the only one to be classed as model. It is simply used as a convenient illustration.

And Rome! Like many another American, my thoughts have been directed toward Rome since my early youth—the mighty Rome of the ancients, the Rome of the popes and of the renaissance, the Rome of Garibaldi and his brother patriots. I have for years bought prints and photographs of Rome's works of art, and I have longed for the idle day when—on some long vacation—I might behold the originals. And besides I have read something of those descriptions written by cab and car-window tourists of the lazy populace of the present Rome, and of its dirt and its fevers. Now that I am in Rome I am also seeing and hearing about a Rome of which I have hitherto known but little. This Rome is a live, active, energetic, new-born city—a centre of the most active social reform. It has a recently formed democracy,

## THE AWAKENING IN ITALY

overriding the old privileged castes, and a citizenship of which industry, thrift, independence, and audacious assertion of human rights are prominent characteristics. Such, at least, are my impressions after the tabloided charges of information that have been thrust on my attention from many sources since my arrival. I cannot say "all sources" in the social scale, for I have not been presented to the King (though I have been assured that I should have had an audience with him were he at present in Rome) nor to the Pope (though a high church official was willing to charge himself with the office of procuring me an audience). I may as well say on this point that I would like to meet Italy's King as a man who has won the hearts of his countrymen, many of whom, like myself, would be content to see his "job" abolished. And most certainly I would pay my respects to the reverend Pope as one held in high esteem by so many thousands of American trade unionists. I appreciate fully that the present is an age when rank and title are fading in recognition of a common manhood. Why should not a representative labor man "shake" and confer with King and Pope?

One of the meetings I attended on Saturday had been called by Professor Montemartini, Director of the National Labor Bureau. The bodies represented were: The Superior Council of Labor, Signor Chiesa; the Permanent Committee on Labor, Signor Abbiate; the Superior Council on Emigration, Signor Nitti; the Superior Council of the Navy, Signor Bruno; the Commissariat on Emigration, Signor Rossi; the

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

National Provident Bank, Professor Medolaghi; the National Confederation of Labor, Signor Quartieron; the National Federation of Agricultural Laborers, Signor Vezzani; the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the Conditions of Labor in the Southern Provinces, Professor Colletti; the Municipality of Rome, Mayor Ernest Nathan; the Chamber of Commerce of Rome, Signor Carretti; the Assessor of Hygiene of Rome, Prof. Rossi Doria; the "Umanitaria" of Milan, Dr. Schiavi; the Rome Labor Exchange, Signor Sabatina; the Society of Italian Agriculturists, Professor Burettini; the Association of Travelling Chairs of Agriculture, Signor Migliani. The Association of Manufacturers of Milan, the Manufacturing League of Turin, and the Agricultural Assembly of Rome also "adhered," as they say here. This list is here given simply because of its significance. The titles of the gentlemen attending the meeting I have omitted, though every one has a title, among the least being "Member of Parliament"; several were prominent trade-union officials. Professor Montemartini read a formal address of welcome. Two hours were taken up with the discussion of labor questions, among them the attitude of the American unions toward Italian immigrants.

Another meeting I attended was with delegates from various Italian trade unions, called by Nicola Trevisonne, a strike leader well known throughout southern Italy. The object, as stated, was to discuss how the stream of Italian laborers going yearly to the United States might be so directed as to lessen com-



## THE AWAKENING IN ITALY

petition with American labor, diminish the hardships of the Italians, and result in especially benefiting the farming interests of America through timely assistance in gathering the crops rather than in glutting the industrial labor market in a few places. "It is necessary," said the circular letter calling the meeting, "that such labor should be disciplined, organized, and skilled in the work it is to accomplish." On the whole, there was profit to those who attended the meeting; amicable feeling, at least, was promoted. However, a curious mental attitude was here disclosed, as has been the case quite uniformly on almost every other similar occasion. It was assumed that, first, immigration to America is a right, and, secondly, that emigration from European countries is to be an invariable social phenomenon. With both of these assumptions I have taken issue. The United States, like any other nation, may, if essential, regulate or restrict immigration. And much of the energy exerted by Italy and other governments in sending their citizens out of the land of their birth ought to be directed to making their lot more tolerable at home. Italy is by nature rich enough and big enough for millions more than its present population.

In Rome the distinctive working-class movement is threefold: (1) Regular trade unions, usually in some degree associated with parliamentary Socialism and looked upon as rather conservative; (2) the Socialist party, led by the "intellectuals"; and (3) mushroom trade unions and other somewhat sporadic striking bodies (the *sindicalisti*), which

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

hold strictly aloof from politics. Sometimes their enemies apply to the members of the latter organizations the epithet "anarchistic," but leaders among them tell me they are simply radical individualists, with a definite program for immediate economic steps, the strike being the main weapon. They assert that they have already a record of success, though their movement is the latest form taken in Italy by the discontented "proletariat." While the Socialists as a party have not held a formal meeting to greet me, the other two organizations just referred to have done so—and the Socialists in numbers have attended. Besides, a very good meeting was held yesterday by the Central Co-operative Society of Rome, with speeches and a collation afterward.

It is to be remembered that at all these meetings my addresses, made in English, were translated, invariably to patient audiences. At one of yesterday's gatherings, there being no one present whose command of both English and Italian was sufficiently certain and fluent for public speaking, a gentleman present spoke my speech after me in French, from which an interpreter gave it to the assemblage in Italian, third hand. And so the light is spread!

In this record of gatherings there must be included a word as to a luncheon given yesterday by the Mayor of Rome. I have the autographs of all present, written on a menu. More than that, I have the indelible impression made upon me there by the words of sincere men. Ernest Nathan is the first Mayor of Israelitish birth that Rome has ever had. He is one

## THE AWAKENING IN ITALY

of the most popular men in Rome, as he would be in America, with all classes, Catholics included, by reason of his high character, broad sympathies, and intelligent interest in the movements to-day favorable to the working-people. Rarely have I met a man so intimately acquainted with all the shades of political and economic opinion among advanced thinkers as Mayor Nathan. Besides, I am told, he knows every man prominent in Rome in any movement or organization whatever. I was glad to sit at table with him and his guests. They all knew sufficient of the American trade-union movement to be aware of its militant character.

In thus making some mention of a number of the gatherings to which I have been rushed during the last few days, my purpose, I hope, is plain. It is to show my American readers the present state of prevailing public opinion in Italy, or its great centres rather, with relation to the social movements of to-day, and in particular to trade unionism as developed in the United States. The radical working-men here admire American unionism. The leaders of thought, regarding a world-wide working-class movement as inevitable, see possibilities in our American methods for progress with possible peace, for continual steps toward a better society without violent collision or imperfectly planned reformation.

I have been attracted in Rome to the International Institute of Agriculture and its purposes. Its most general aim is to lessen unnecessary fluctuations in the world's prices of the staples of agriculture, thus

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

benefiting the capital and labor of farm and factory—of the farm, because such fluctuations are manipulated against the interests of the producer and therefore of his labor; of the factory, because they lead to precautionary measures on the part of the manufacturer detrimental to the interests of labor, the staples being often the raw material of the factory. The way to lessen unnecessary fluctuations, the promoters of the Institute believe, is to obtain, assemble, and disseminate timely and authoritative reports of the world's supply of the staples, publicity being the determining factor in the formation of prices and tending toward their steady maintenance. Such reports must relate to the entire producing area of the staples, Secretary Wilson, of the Department of Agriculture, saying: "Reports covering part of an area of a given crop may be used by self-interest crop-reporting agencies to mislead." At present there is no such authoritative information to be had. The statements obtainable consist either of official reports issued by a few governments and elaborated under varying systems, or (for by far the larger portion of the world's summary) of reports gathered and published at private expense by divergent groups of private interests, and consequently biased. The few who understand what this situation implies stand amazed at its significance. It points to a monopoly in the knowledge of the world's supply; dangerous, because responsible to no nation. The aim of such monopoly being private gain at public expense, it diminishes the measure of bread to the toilers and turns topsy-turvy the law of supply and

## THE AWAKENING IN ITALY

demand. And it is to check this form of cornering that the International Institute of Agriculture was founded. Forty-eight nations, having ratified a treaty, have given the Institute its seat in Rome, where a noble building has been provided for it by the King, Italy not being an exporting or importing country for the world's markets. Each of the nations to this treaty, having by its own system gathered information as to its growth of the staples of agriculture, is to send a report to the Institute, where, after being assembled with the reports from the other nations, all the knowledge will be open to the world, free, permitting supply and demand to operate unimpeded.

Mr. David Lubin, delegate of the United States to the Institute, is devoting his time and large means to promoting its work. I have reason to believe in his entire sincerity, having watched his labors for fifteen years in the United States, and as the enterprise is a helpful one to mankind I have looked into it as best I might, and deem it noteworthy among the institutions I have visited and deserving the sympathetic, practical, and continued support of our Federal Government. The Institute, I am informed, will be ready to begin issuing its reports early in the coming year.

## OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES COME TO STAY

NAPLES, *September 26, 1909.*

MORE than one hundred thousand emigrants embarked at Italian ports for the United States during the first three months of 1909. The officials of the Emigration Commission of Italy say that this rate will not be maintained for the remaining three-fourths of the year, their estimate for the entire twelve months being 225,000. The emigrants leave in large numbers in the spring to engage in the outdoor work carried on in the open seasons in America—railroad construction, farming, building operations, and the like. Other than the official figures of the Commission have been quoted to me, according to which more than 200,000 Italian emigrants left for the United States in the first six months of the present year, the actual increase over the first six months of 1908, which witnessed a falling off of emigration due to the commercial crisis, being 151,506. These two sets of statistics, therefore, indicate that the emigration from Italy to the United States in 1909 will be from 225,000 to 300,000. The average for the six years 1902-07 was about 250,000; in 1903, the number was 214,767; in 1906, 392,055; in 1907, 283,671. The total number of emigrants leaving Italy for all countries in 1906 was 787,000, South America receiving the majority.

## OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES

If we had an equal yearly emigration from the United States proportionate to the population of Italy, it would reach nearly two millions. It may be imagined what a profound national sensation would be occasioned by such a social phenomenon. We have taken into the United States every year for a decade a net foreign addition to our population that caused us to speak of a million coming as not extraordinary. But suppose two millions of our working - people were leaving us! Whether or not Italians are as precious to Italy as real Americans are to the United States, in all Italy—so far as I am able to judge—no other question equals in general interest that of the loss of her people through emigration. It is viewed with mingled sensations. To the poverty-stricken able-bodied men seeking work, emigration promises bread, liberty, education; America is El Dorado. To the various schools of reformers and politicians, it is a source for remedial social projects and office-winning partisan cries. For the Government, it inevitably must mean a colossal failure of its institutions. Why should men by the millions be starved out of a land which could yield subsistence to twice its present population?

From my arrival in Italy I have been daily—aye, almost hourly—in communication with the men most closely associated with emigration as a public question—Immigration Commission officials, trade-union representatives, public-spirited citizens, writers on the problem, steamship-company representatives. Consequently, I may offer some observations on the subject with the feeling that they may be helpful to my readers.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

During the last few years there have been radical changes in Italy in the methods of conducting this great migration of human beings to the New World. For a decade or more, in the '80's and '90's, the bad treatment of Italian emigrants in transit to America was a constant theme for both philanthropic and sensational writers. Agitation brought beneficial results. Of these, the principal in its effects was the establishment, in 1901, of the Italian Emigration Commission. Its work is to carry into effect the laws on the subject passed by the Italian Parliament. If I may believe what I have been told by persons in various walks of life whose positions bring them into contact with the stream of emigrants at the ports of embarkation, the Commission has yearly become more and more effective, until at present its operations are at the highest in point of efficiency yet attained in protecting the emigrant in his rights and obtaining for him the comforts possible during his steerage transportation.

The chief ports of departure for emigrants are Naples and Palermo. A much smaller number sail from Genoa. Five-sixths of our new-comers from Italy are from the southern provinces—Sicily, Naples, Calabria, the Abruzzi. The others are mainly from the extreme northern provinces of Piedmont, Lombardy, and Venice. From the centre of Italy—the provinces of Tuscany and Rome, for example—we get very few. Not one man in a score is from a city; nearly all are from farm villages. The human stream that pours through the city of Naples, amounting in some months to tens of thousands, carries along with it a remarkably



## OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES

small number of its people. Why are these venture-some seekers for work in the New World country people? Why does not the city workman emigrate? Is it because he is more keen to resent imposition, less liable to submit himself to the hardships in the emigrant's experience, less inclined to work? Or is it because he resists the artificial processes employed in promoting emigration?

On the latter point I have it from several sources of information that the day of drumming emigrants by false promises is quite past. Neither the steamship companies nor any other agency is permitted, as at one time was common, to distribute posters or other printed matter containing more than time-table announcements and other necessary information to intending emigrants. That "publicity" which consisted of extravagant accounts of suddenly acquired fortunes, or of the liberal land policy of railroad companies or our Government itself, or of enormous wages paid in certain localities in America, has been suppressed. There are thirteen shipping companies, it is true, which have their competing agencies throughout Italy, but these, being subject to the Emigration Commission's supervision, are greatly restricted in their endeavors to obtain "business."

What chiefly induces emigration to-day is the information sent home to friends and relatives from Italians in America or given to their neighbors by returned emigrants. Usually the married men make the venture of crossing the ocean first alone; when they have saved enough they return for their families.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Besides, many of the younger men return to their native villages, as has been the custom for generations with migrating Italian workmen, not only in times of crises, but after an illness, or for the purpose of marrying or of rejoining their parents or other relatives for a time. The wanderers thus at home spread the story of high American wages, of the advantages of American citizenship, of the future awaiting Italian children in the land of the common-school and other democratic institutions—and the Italian peasant who hears the wondrous tale from his brother or neighbor has a fever for change in his fibre that burns until he too boards ship and sails westward.

I asked several emigrants about to sail at Naples why they were going to America. All replied in about the same words—"To make money." But an American professional man, for years in this port, who has talked with hundreds that have returned from America only to take a last farewell to Italy and cross the Atlantic again, accompanied by their families, told me: "This is but their crude way of expressing their ideal that lies beyond the desire to make money. The poor, honest, hard-working Italian—and this the emigrant usually is—has his aspirations: a home, a happy wife, education for his children, the life of a fully developed man for himself. All this is evidenced in his speedy transformation after enjoying for a few years in America his increased wages and opportunities for improvement." The stock story of the rejected bath-tub by the unwashed coming up, as it invariably does in any conversation relating to the emigrant, this gentleman

## OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES

had some testimony pertinent to the subject. Again and again, he said, he had witnessed the indignation of southern Italian emigrant women on board ship when urged to take a good, wholesome wash in one of the steerage bath-rooms now provided on all the steamers. "Me take a bath? Never! Why, I am not a bad woman!" But he had also seen springing up in Italian villages what are called American cottages, built either by returned emigrants who had gained a competency in America or by relatives who, inheriting or accumulating some means in Italy, had become acquainted with the comforts of American home life through their relatives, now full-fledged Americans. These new cottages, marvellous examples of civilized life to the people in an Italian village, possess as their crowning glory that thing of primary importance, a bath-room, all the equipments of which bear the firm name and trade-mark of a first-class American plumbers' supply-house.

Protected by the Italian Government from the misrepresentations of unscrupulous steamship drummers for trade, the emigrant leaving his village for America is at once taken in hand by the Italian Emigrant Commission. With the railway journey to his port of departure begins an actual, though as yet not entirely thorough, supervision over him which never ceases until he sets foot at Ellis Island. In cases, until some time afterward, agents of the Italian Government look after parties of their compatriots.

The emigrant arriving at an Italian port from the interior is by law entitled before going on his vessel to

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

thirty-six hours' keep at a city lodging-house at the expense of the steamship company from which he has bought his ticket. Emigrant lodging-houses are licensed and supervised by the Emigration Commission. In each room is posted a notice giving its measurements, its air space, its allowable number of beds, and other particulars relating to hygiene. The food is also prescribed. I visited one of these lodging-houses, and found it better than might have been expected; its rooms were light, airy, and tidy; the bedding was clean, though of coarse material.

Before going on board ship the emigrant is advised to change his Italian money into American, or to buy postal orders, a branch of the Bank of Naples being established for these purposes in the Emigration Commission's building close to the quays. Italian and American doctors then take him in hand. His outfit of clothing, if suspicious, is run into a sort of retort, in which it is subjected to a heat that leaves in it nothing alive. The doctors examine him for contagious diseases, especially of the eyes and scalp, common among the Italian poor. The Commission's agents and two physicians whom I interrogated on this point told me that on the average 20 per cent of the Italians presenting themselves for passage to North America are rejected on account of disease. The Italian *Emigration Bulletin* for 1909 mentions the fact that it is much easier for Italians to land in Argentina without risk of rejection than in the United States. The proportion passing under medical care on the voyage to South America is by about 20 per cent the greater.

## OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES

This system of rejection at the port of departure gives rise both to hardships and deceptions. In a family—of three, five, seven, perhaps—the mother, or father, or a baby may be rejected. At the last moment a decision must be made as to what can be done, with the result that in some cases the entire family remains in Naples or Palermo, or the stricken one is hurriedly provided for and left behind. Perhaps the disease has manifested itself only after the family left home. It is said that since the enforcement of the strict regulations of the Commission the emigration of Italians from Italian ports has relatively decreased, while increasing at Belgian, German, and French ports. The 20 per cent excluded, or a part of them, and all others who believe they might be rejected, take chances on being landed from non-Italian vessels at New York, where the exclusions are less than 1 per cent from all causes. The emigrant will argue that his ailment may pass away in a few days, or that the examining physicians may have been mistaken, or that the Ellis Island inspection may allow him to slip through.

On board the steamer the emigrant has a legally stipulated number of cubic feet in the steerage sleeping-quarters; he has food of a quality and quantity prescribed by the Commission, and he is protected throughout the voyage by an agent of the Italian Government. On Friday I witnessed the embarkation of about two hundred emigrants on the Lloyd-Sabaudo steamship *San Giorgio*. If there was possibility to avoid the Italian Government's measures for the protection of the emigrant on this vessel, the fact

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

was not apparent. I visited at my leisure the steerage (in which the sexes were separated), the kitchens, the bath-rooms, etc., and the women's hospital, the latter having two nurses in attendance and being well fitted out for its purposes. The steerage passengers were a well-appearing lot as to health, exhibiting certain general characteristics of southern Italians so noticeable to Americans—an incapacity to see why children should be over-encumbered with clothing for the purpose of concealment, an indisposition to study the arts of the manicure, a robust indifference to the accumulation on the deck of the rubbish and waste we call dirt. The *San Giorgio* was also to take on board five hundred emigrants at Palermo to-day.

In the Commissioner's bureau at Naples the emigrants can obtain instructions as to how to proceed on landing at New York. On the walls hang posters of the big official Italian lodging-house in Broad Street, where they may have a bed at ten cents a night, and of the general Italian protective agency in Center Street.

Thus far has the Italian Government gone in its paternal care of its emigrants. Let us hope these steps are but preparatory to a further stage in which it will use all its endeavors to keep them at home. They would be happier in Italy if the conditions of life were barely tolerable.

Perhaps America may be the providential means of another, a social, renaissance in Italy. To some extent it has already revolutionized the nation's labor market. Before the full flood of emigration to Amer-

## OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES

ica, the farm-hand's wages in the backward provinces ran from 30 to 50 cents a day in harvest-time, the rest of the year being less. Now the range is 60 cents upward, even in cases to \$1.50. Able-bodied young or middle-aged laborers are scarce in districts where only a decade ago strong men were forever begging for work. Statistics show this must be true. The Italian Commission issued a few years ago a diagram map, made up mostly from the United States census, showing that the number of Italians in the various States in 1900 amounted to about eight hundred thousand. The same bureau now estimates that next year's census will report the number between two and two and a half millions. South America has in all taken more. It is not only the absence of these workers from Italy that influences the nation's labor market; there is a changed mental attitude on the part of those who remain. They believe that the worst fate to befall them in America promises something more than the average standard of living at home; the modern revolt of labor against its deprivations through the privileges given other social classes is penetrating to the remotest corners of the kingdom; the national schools, poor as they may be, are lowering the percentage of illiterates, which but a few years ago in the southern country districts reached a general average of at least fifty. Conditions, on the whole, cannot permit labor in Italy to fall back to its level when it was asleep and in deep ignorance. It is fast awakening to a new life.

While in Milan, and afterward in Rome, I was asked regarding the general situation of Italian labor in

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

America and what suggestions I had for its improvement. In reply I summarized the notorious facts relative to the abuses of the padrones, the interpreters, the so-called bankers in the Italian colonies in America, and the steamship companies of various countries competing for steerage passengers. Besides such steps as have been taken by the Italian Government, I recommended that the trade-unionists of Italy endeavor to organize Italian laborers as far as possible before going to America. It would be well for both countries. When Italy ceases to be a reservoir for slavish labor to American employers, American trade-union men will have fewer strikes and fewer strikers to support. The emigrants themselves, instructed in trade-unionism, would be less liable to take the places of workers and could be assisted in maintaining the American standard of living, another name for the union scale of wages and the union workday. The statement of these simple facts was construed in some quarters, where "special interests" prevailed, as the "revelation" of my real mission to Italy. My answer was that my only mission to Italy was to be helpful to America's and Italy's workers. The comment upon this statement was that I should be "regarded as a diplomat!" The special interests to which I particularly refer are the so-called "intellectuals" who are at the head of the Socialist movement of the kingdom—doctors, lawyers, professors, and the like. They have declared that I am "playing a game," trying to paralyze Italian emigration and the consequent competition with America's workers, by demanding



## OUR ITALIAN RELATIVES

organization of the laborers before they should leave the country. Lastly, taking my alleged "mission" most seriously, the working-men leaders of the Labor Exchange in Naples (Borsa del Lavoro) urged that the American Federation of Labor appoint special organizers from among their own number to "discipline" Italian laborers—organize and teach them unionism—in the southern provinces. I can only tell these leaders that our Federation has never contemplated invading Italy, that my mission is but to be helpful and to seek information, and that in recommending organization I but ask the wage-workers to direct their own energies in their own way, according to union principles, well known and established.

As to the "intellectuals" in Italy, they deserve a paragraph in a special letter which I hope to write on the men of that kidney who are at present playing a disappearing rôle in European trade-unionism. I have frequently asked Italians why their union officials were not wage-workers of the trade. In not a few cases the reply has been that among the unskilled in this country trade-unionism is a comparatively new movement; the impulse for organization has come mostly from outside the masses themselves; the "discipline" must be imparted from men of the higher brow; and, too, the working-classes are to be inducted into the "international revolution of the proletariat"; the organizations, as formed, are to be taught economics, "class consciousness," the co-operative commonwealth—and politics. I have noticed that in general they have taken the last lesson first, to the neglect and detriment

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

of the interest of the workers, the "intellectuals" taking the offices and possessing the advantages and emoluments thereof as all their own.

It is worth noting that in every stratum of the real life of Italy I have been regarded and treated as an American representative of a great cause for the uplift of man in every land. The Press has published many columns of news articles on the labor question as related to the American Federation of Labor—interviews and editorials. It may seem vain, but I am fully persuaded that the real movement for labor's disinthralment in Italy has been given a considerable impetus forward and upward through my visit. I have been frequently told so in the last few days. I fervently hope it is true.

## GENOA AND TURIN—A DAY'S WORK IN EACH

HOME COMING, AT SEA, *October 8, 1909.*

My trip to Italy, from Paris back to Paris, took up just fifteen days—September 14-29. The time was distributed in this order: Milan, two days; Florence, a half-day; Rome, four and a half days; Naples, three and a half; Genoa, one and a half; Turin, a half. Three full nights were spent on fast express trains, besides several parts of nights. During this busy journey I caught an aviator's glimpse of the rich and sunny land of Italy, saw the leading men in the various working-class movements, whether radical or moderate, interviewed government officials whose duties bring them into contact with the wage-earners, and collected enough books, pamphlets, circulars, etc., on social questions to keep a good reader occupied many a day.

Some of my American correspondents have asked me in what manner I was enjoying "my vacation." Others, readers of these letters, have wished to know my methods of collecting information. May I, in reply to both queries, speak somewhat in detail of my day and a half in Genoa as an example? My American friend, J. W. Sullivan, of New York, and I arrived in that beautiful hill-skirted seaport at half past six

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

o'clock in the morning, having left Naples at two the previous afternoon. After breakfast and a wash-up at a hotel, we made our way about nine to the hall and headquarters of the Central Labor Union (Camera del Lavoro). A half-hour there was taken up by the assistant secretaries in gathering together some of the local leaders—the secretaries of the carpenters' and typographical unions, secretaries of other bodies, the editor of the local working-men's daily newspaper. Meantime I had been shown the meeting-hall of the organized groups, some of the secretaries' offices, and the display of two or three score letter-boxes in the hallway, one for each organization—testimony as to the much-mingled character of the local movement, made up, as it is, of longshoremen's companionship groups, municipal employes' associations, distributive co-operative societies, semi-political bodies, and both skilled and unskilled labor unions.

Then interviews. A member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, a lawyer representing a working-class constituency, was my chief interrogator. The responses to the inquiries put by him and the other representative Italians, as written up by its editor, made two columns in next morning's issue of the working-men's paper, *Il Lavoro*. Questioning from my side took up nearly the rest of the day as we went about the city in a party. None of the Genovese we met spoke English. Several of them talked in French to me, and my colleague rapidly translated to me their statements, at times sentence by sentence, besides informing me as to the substance of the matter in print

## GENOA AND TURIN

in Italian which our friends from time to time handed over to us—reports, circulars, newspapers, etc.

A visit then to the Department of Docks, which in Genoa stands separate from both the municipal and general governments—a unique feature of administration in Italy, I was told. The administrative palace of the department, an ancient edifice restored and beautified, is one of the interesting sights of the city. A short visit next to the steamship *Moltke*, which lay in the harbor, taking on emigrants and other passengers to America. A look at a co-operative store. I declined making a visit of inspection to the co-operative printing-office; I had already seen several in Italy—all alike. An explanation by our guides of the co-operative methods of the longshoremen, somewhat resembling those of our lake-port workers. A running conversation during the hours we spent in going from point to point, our subject being the trade union and political organization and methods of the working-classes of the city. As I was already acquainted with Italian methods in labor and political movements, my inquiries were quite of a schedule form, and the replies embodied but little that was new. In the evening, on getting back to our hotel, additional packages of printed reports, etc., were awaiting us—to be digested months hence in America.

As the places of amusement in a city have their revelations as to the tastes and ideas of the classes patronizing them, it is a question whether my visit to one of them that evening was play or work. Genoa at the time of my visit had open a very slim list of

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

theatres, and these only for variety performances. My guides objected to one which seemed to be possibly a resort for the plain people, saying it gave so poor a show as not to be worth visiting. We went to the best—save the mark! It opened at nine o'clock. The orchestra seats were three lire (sixty cents), but a chair in a kennel called a "*loge*" above the orchestra level cost a lire or two more. Rather a slim attendance in the costlier parts of the house, but in the rear, in the thirty and twenty cent places, the benches were packed, mostly by young men. As a whole, the audience would be classed in Europe as "*bourgeois*"—not of the element which works so long and hard as to render smart personal appearance difficult of attainment. The performance, taken in its entirety, told the story of popular show-place development in Genoa. Interlarded in the dozen numbers on the program were six given by young women soloists, girls of about one type—dark-eyed, jetty-haired, short-skirted, much bespangled. Each sang half a dozen songs. Not one singer was possessed of a tolerable voice, or of more than ordinary good looks, or of the knowledge of stage business to be expected of an actress of mediocre qualifications. The airs they sang were flat, commonplace, and monotonous, but all were applauded. One of these dull stars was called out repeatedly. Why? Those who could understand what the words signified knew better than I. There was no mistake possible in the gestures and glances.

I asked one of our guides as to the average salary of these young women. The reply was ten lire a night

## GENOA AND TURIN

—about two dollars. In Europe talent which on serious cultivation is not pronounced receives but beggarly compensation. Even that which is good but not yet famous may wait long for recognition. Only a few nights before, while attending a performance of *The Pearl Fisher*, in Naples, an old resident of that city said to me: "Here, in the *Mercadante*, I heard Caruso in this same opera when he sang at five francs a night!" An American dealer in fine hand-painted fans, on entering an atelier in Vienna where he was always sure of bargains, observed that the finest artist among the five painters of the force was missing. "Yes," said the proprietor, "he had a chance to better his condition; he has become a tram-car conductor."

Orchestral music is much more common throughout ✓ Europe than in America; theatre, concert-hall, and hotel and restaurant orchestras are usually double the size of ours. I was told in Paris by an old-time American journalist, who is now a true Parisian, that some of the first violinists of the superb opera orchestra in that city are paid forty dollars a month—an evidence of the superabundance of talent just a grade or two short of the highest. In England some of our American vaudeville stars, accustomed to their hundreds a week, are offered only as much a month, and they take it or go home, unless they happen to strike the popular fancy, when they can demand more, and then too they may have as many as four engagements in London every night. As to journalists, I heard rather pitiful tales of their remuneration in nearly every country I visited. There are, of course, a few

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

celebrated pens on each of the larger daily newspapers, but on the Press, as in Art, second-rate or average talent abounds in the market, and consequently runs few automobiles. Its tendencies are rather to street-cars.

But—the labor question? Dear friends, that is precisely about what I am writing. In America our musicians are organized; ninety-nine-hundredths of them have found out that their art is a merchantable commodity subject to competition, which, unchecked, would work injury to all in the profession. We have also large art-work factories, where the precious metals, for example, are wrought, and the organized artists in them need not aspire to become street-car conductors, though, by the way, these worthy workers where organized have shorter hours and higher pay as compared with their competitors. Our artist workers and unskilled toilers are equally eligible to organization, and all are protected and benefited. Labor organization of the highly skilled and semi-professional element of society has progressed further in America than in Europe. There the intellectual proletariat is a distinct and unorganized element of society. It is described to me as being in active rebellion, open or secret, against society as influenced by the European monarchies. It is plotting against the standing armies, against the Church as united with the State, against hereditary aristocracies, against all the artificial obstacles that exalt vested privilege, and consequently result in giving the less opportunity to merit to gain recognition.



## GENOA AND TURIN

On coming out of the Genoa theatre we strolled nearly two miles along well-lighted streets to gain our hotel, which was near the station. Our guide directed my attention to the *portici* of the Via Venti Settembre, a marvellous marble-and-granite two-story colonnade on each side of the street extending for perhaps half a mile. The finish of the stonework, the variety in the architecture, the designs of the ceilings, the massiveness of the structure of these *portici* place them among those marvels of art which continually astonish the tourist in Italy. Passing a square surrounded by great public buildings we entered the Via Roma, along which is ranged a series of palaces seldom rivalled in any other European city. Side-alleys, narrow as ordinary hallways, wound their way down hill toward the harbor. A fact to be noted in these streets, brilliantly lighted by electricity, was that before midnight all were deserted. We walked blocks without meeting even a policeman. There is no "night life" in Genoa, except in a café or two, which to be found must be sought. Rome, too, by the way, at ten o'clock is as quiet as a country village. The street scenes to which one grows accustomed in European cities generally on leaving the theatre are rarely to be witnessed, I am told, in any city in Italy except Milan. In Naples one may sit for an hour in front of the Café Gambrinus, at the heart of the most brilliantly lighted quarter, until midnight, when the cafés close, and not see one example of what gives Piccadilly, Friedrichstrasse, and the Boulevard Madeleine their peculiar reputation. The treasurer of a large Neapolitan hotel

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

system, whose duties have carried him to points frequented by tourists from Egypt to Belgium, told me that no Italian girls are to be seen among the throngs of light women commonly found close upon the track of wealth seeking diversion. These facts—if such they really are—throw some light on the problem of vice as associated with poverty. Some poor nations have been famous for their virtues. Italy is poor? (No! The land is rich. The vast majority of Italians are poor.) The women are sturdy, brave, hard-working.

Before leaving Genoa for Turin, the next morning at eleven o'clock, we saw the city in its larger features by taxicab. Our chauffeur knew just where to go and how long to remain at each view-point in order to give us a bird's-eye view of the city and bring his taximeter to mark a reasonably good charge. He zigzagged the auto up the series of high hills that enclose Genoa, through fine new streets flanked with great detached apartment-houses and past well-kept squares. The grand view of the city and harbor from any of the heights at which we stopped that fine morning was one of the rewards for his troubles to the tired traveller. Genoa is in all parts picturesque, at points in the new city magnificent, while in the old down-town streets it is a reminder of the Middle Ages.

Our chauffeur put us down at the station in time for our train. He was one of that most modern type developed by his new profession, the athletic and courteous, daring yet cautious, driver of a power-horse; excellent as a guide, ready as a mechanician. Beyond all that, the chauffeur must be taximetrically

## GENOA AND TURIN

honest. He is in general a fine fellow. I tender him my respects. He saved me days and weeks of time in seeing Europe.

In Turin my duties were confined to an interview with the leaders of the General Confederation of Labor of Italy. It terminated to the entire satisfaction of both sides. Some misunderstanding as to what my visit to Italy signified had arisen through my meeting representatives of the governmental departments in Rome and the leaders of the labor movement in southern Italy, which is not in accord with that of the north. Some of the newspapers, also, making wild guesses as to what had brought me to Italy, had tried to set up an imaginary tilt between the Confederation of Italy and the Federation of America. It seemed a popular belief that America was as deeply agitated over Italian immigration as Italy itself. Our unions were described as opposed to immigration and systematically preventing Italian workmen from joining American organizations.

To the Turin delegates I could but repeat the fact that our unions in general are anxious to organize the immigrants. Many of our skilled trade unions admit a qualified foreign new-comer as a member on production of his home union card. The Italian confreres at Turin themselves cited no cases in which Italian unionists had been excluded from American unions. They were also satisfied with my statement that no treaty had been thought of between our unions and the Italian Government or the southern unions. Before it should enter into negotiations with any other

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

organization in Italy the American Federation of Labor would doubtless recognize the Italian Confederation. As to the Americans joining the International Secretariat, that was a separate question yet to be acted upon at our annual convention.

The Confederation of Labor of Italy has a total membership of about three hundred and twenty-five thousand, as reported by General Secretary Rigola, in Turin. In composition and form the Building Trades Union, whose headquarters I visited, represents the common type of the big unions in the Confederation, which is of the industrial system. This national union, with about forty-five thousand members, takes in on a common basis of membership a considerable number of the various trades the labor of which is connected with house-building. In all but the larger cities these separate trades have but one common union. They have one kind of travelling-card within Italy, but for international transferral there is a special card, given only to certain trades. Nearly one hundred thousand Italians who do the rough work on buildings migrate every spring to other European countries, to return home in the winter. The General Secretary asserted that, through the exchange of international cards, most of the Italians had entirely ceased "blacklegging," formerly common with them. They now usually uphold the foreign scale of wages. He wished to have a similar international understanding established with the American Building Trades unions.

To what extent such an arrangement would affect

## GENOA AND TURIN

either the Italian working-men or ourselves cannot be said off-hand. Of all the immigration from Italy coming to us, the proportion from the northern provinces is hardly a twelfth. On a map of Italy hanging on a wall in the Building Trades offices were drawn many little circles showing where local unions existed throughout the country. About Turin, Milan, and other cities of the north, they were as thick as bird-shot fired from a gun. But about Florence they were few, and in southern Italy hardly one appeared. The books of the union made the contrast for the different parts of the kingdom even worse. The national union had no branches in Calabria or Sicily, whence a great majority of our immigrants come. It would appear, therefore, that the whole question of our organizations not receiving union building - trades Italians into them, with the alleged grievances of the Italians against us growing out of it, is almost purely talk. This suspicion of a wrong somewhere arose originally from the ruck of indefinite and unfounded charges drawn up by political and book-worm Socialists in America and Italy hunting for a grievance against American trade-unionism.

But scant forty-eight hours were left me at Paris to make preparations for the homeward voyage. Our party of five, reunited, took an express train for Havre, Friday, October 1, and here is our steamship now, October 8, in sight of the lights of New York Harbor. But quarantine and customs regulations are to hold us back from landing until to-morrow. Ship-engineering and navigation have done their best to finish our ocean

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

journey with speed; the inefficiencies of departmental administration, which fails to operate at night, as railway and steamship companies of course do, are the cause of lengthening the voyage by one more uncomfortable night. Science and private management here score against governmental red-tape and bureaucratic rigidity.

The four-months' trip done, reflections upon it are in order. Do I return a better American? Is the American labor movement "ahead of the world"? What do I think of European Socialism? Do I bring back suggestions for social improvements? What of the movement in Germany? in Hungary? in France? in Italy? in England? What is the general tendency of the working-class ideals in Europe? And what as to the leaders whose names stand for certain tendencies? Etc., etc.? Already questions such as these have been sent me oversea. I may expect many more, some asking for details, in the next few weeks. And then my friends the reporters I may count upon as having queries no other class of men ever put to me. In reply, I have to say that the boxes of books, pamphlets, reports, etc., which I bring back with me must be drawn upon to some extent in answering questions in detail. Besides, various notes are yet to be gone over and digested. I feel I have yet something to say about the great trip. So I greet my kindly readers with a grasp of the hand, and tell them I'll not bid them adieu until I shall have further summarized for their consideration some of the general facts and impressions I gained abroad.

## PLAIN WATER AND PURE AIR AT A PREMIUM

WASHINGTON, D. C., *October 19, 1909.*

ALL Americans who travel in Europe become revolutionists. They revolt in spirit and words against the almost general antipathy to plain water and pure air, against the universal tipping system, against the European theatre, and against the colossal blunder, from start to finish, of the European railroad. In his indictment of European conditions, the American citizen imbued with the teachings of the fathers of our Republic may have a series of further counts, but on those just enumerated even the half-Europeanized travelling Americans I happened to meet seemed all to agree.

The absence of the common use of water results from monopolies of water-sources, conspiracies of publicans, from a lack of plumbers' supplies, from a misconception of the word "bath," and from pure ignorance. Since none of these causes are in full operation in his own country, the American has had opportunity afforded him to exercise a reasonable liberty in drinking, washing, swimming, and bathing.

There really was something of a revolution in England twenty-five years ago which brought about the establishment of a public water-supply in many munic-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

ipalities and small towns where previously there existed either an insufficient company service or merely the old-fashioned wells. To accomplish this change required much agitation, including a vast deal of radical writing. Some of the booklets of the Fabian Socialists dealt with the idea of a public water-supply as if it must be linked up with Socialism, and when subsequently town after town established its own water department, the Fabians hailed the work as a step forward to their ideal State. But inasmuch as we in America had long been accustomed to look on "city" water as merely a feature of our common sanitation, its Socialism was no more obvious to us than are our public schools. When London only a few years ago abolished its old parochial and borough systems and centralized the supply in a water board, it began doing what New York had done for nearly a century.

However, England's water revolution is incomplete. Many of its towns with from five to ten thousand inhabitants have to-day no public system in the American sense. Running-water on tap from house-pipes is rare as compared with America. Questioned on this point, an English fellow-passenger, pointing out from the car window whole farm villages, asserted that not one of them had a water-piping system. Many American tourists and some Englishmen have assured me that they had never seen running water in an English hotel or boarding-house bedroom. More than one bath-tub in a London "lodging and board-residence" establishment is rarely to be looked for. Only the new hotels, except those advertising "luxu-



## WATER AND AIR AT A PREMIUM

rious appointments," have more than one bath-room on a floor, though there may be several bath-tub compartments in one big room. Being told that "even the working-man" nowadays wants a bath-tub on moving into a new cottage or apartment, on visiting some of the municipal or building society dwellings, I naturally looked for the counterpart of the neat, convenient, and well-fitted-up bath-room to which so many of our own wage earners are accustomed when living at the American standard, and what was shown me was in some places a tub sunk in the kitchen flooring and covered with a trap-door, and in others a sort of closet with a cold-water faucet near the ceiling for a shower, the cement flooring answering for a tub. In a small number of instances there was a real bath-room. Usually the bath was mentioned as an innovation, a matter of public pride, a harbinger of a dawning civilization among the working-people. It was a fact, it was said, that in some old parts of London there was not a single bath-tub in an area of blocks.

In the scarcity of bath-tubs a new light is thrown on the familiar picture of the well-to-do Englishman travelling with his portable tin tub. It is a point in evidence, not that the English have the bathing habit, but that as a nation they lack the habit. A travelling American would as soon think of carrying with him in America a bed as a bath-tub; he is sure to find either at any hotel or boarding-house.

On the Continent the American tourists one meets have a fund of amusing stories to relate on the subject of the elusive bath. One man I met was able to sum

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

up the general facts of the subject from the position of an expert. He was a large manufacturer of plumbers' supplies in one of our Western cities. He said that any town of ten thousand inhabitants in the United States employs more plumbers and buys more plumbing material than any city of one hundred thousand on the European Continent. He had "nosed" around in Paris, in his enthusiasm for his profession as sanitary engineer, with the result that he wonders how that city escapes a scourge of fevers. In view of testimony of such a scope, particular stories lose much of their force. However, one or two:

An acquaintance of mine, on applying for board in a French family, found in the appearance of the apartment much promise of a refined and otherwise beautiful home life. "Is there a bath?" he ventured. "Oh yes, monsieur," was the reply, "just across the street."

The French idea of a bath seems to be that it is an elaborate ceremony for a special periodic occasion, on which superheat, a vaporous atmosphere, persistent scrubbing, strong soap, and many big towels make an impression on skin accumulations of the recent but indefinite past.

A boarder at a Paris *pension* (better class of boarding-house) told me that in the three connecting apartments rented by his landlord in a substantial and well-situated building there was not one bath-tub. Recently a New York gentleman, on purchasing a fine mansion in the Champs Elysées quarter, expended nearly forty thousand dollars in remodelling it, one

## WATER AND AIR AT A PREMIUM

part of the expense being the installation of a bathroom, the first ever in the house.

In the other Continental countries I found nowhere the American attitude toward water as a free drink and a personal purifier. Of course, some of the newest and largest hotels have a bath in connection with each suite of rooms, but these are houses of the first order, influenced by the demands from the stream of wealthy tourist Americans. But just a little short of these hotels one obtains revelations of the European conception of the bath. In Vienna our party stayed at one of the largest commercial hotels in the city. An order for a bath during our stay met with but one reply: "*Ausser betrieb*" (not running). In Hamburg and Berlin the new municipal and co-operative working-men's tenement-houses have some provision for family baths, but these were very poor, from the American standpoint.

In Italy what plumbers' supplies one sees have usually been imported, a very large proportion from the United States. I can hardly refrain from giving some of our enterprising manufacturers by name a passing word of praise for their share in thus assisting in hydropathically revolutionizing Europe.

Am I using too much space on this homely topic of water? Indeed, I think not. My words are not idle ones. I write with a purpose. Prevailing American customs imply a great mission for Europe. I consider that the very first practical offering our people can make to suffering humanity in the Old World is a good lesson in our use of plain water! In fact, if there

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

is a Baron de Hirsch or a Carnegie by another name at present fumbling over his hoard of a hundred millions or so, uncertain as to how to devote it in the uplift, let him introduce in Europe America's methods of supplying to everybody water to drink, to use in the kitchen, and in which to bathe. Let him never let up in his crusade against uncleanness and the miseries of alcohol until he has pure running-water at a fountain at every street corner and in every household, in every room if necessary, of all backward Europe.

One reason that water in some European countries is not plentiful in proportion to the people's needs is the power the landlords wield in preventing the community from exercising eminent domain over the water-sources and establishing the works necessary to a water-supply. The philanthropic millionaire could help in spreading for the benefit of the populations interested the American legal principles applicable to this problem.

On the subject of drinking-water I can write with not only deep feeling but considerable knowledge, for I pleaded for a drink of plain, not necessarily iced, but clean, cold water in every place I visited in Europe.

Nowhere in Europe did I ever see a water-cooler. Nowhere could the guest at a hotel walk over to the corner of the office or lobby as in an American hotelry and draw for himself a glass of water. Not one European sojourner at a hotel with whom I talked on the subject—except the few who had been in America—who knew of any way of getting a drink of water other than calling upon a servant to bring it—for a tip.

## WATER AND AIR AT A PREMIUM

I have travelled a full day and night by rail with no possibility of getting a drop of water on the entire train. At a few big stations bottled water was sold meantime at excessive prices. At table, water is the last drink served, if at all. One of our party, a more general water-drinker by habit, declared that in England it required three requests of a waiter to get a glass of water, and in Germany five orders and a fight. In Germany and Austria at the restaurants it is the rule to add half a mark (twelve cents) to the price of a meal when the guest drinks water only. The process of obtaining a drink of water from the faucet runs thuswise. The waiter asks: "What drink, sir?" The guest replies: "Fresh water." Waiter: "What kind?" and he rattles off a string of bottled spring or manufactured waters. Guest: "None of these—plain water from the faucet." Waiter: "What's that?" A colloquy ensues, the waiter playing he is mystified. Then he brings all the wine and beer orders to the tables he serves and forgets the water. When this performance is gone through at every meal for weeks and weeks in different countries, the water-drinker in the end usually surrenders to the "system." It is only when a party of lusty-lunged Americans, seated together at a table, shout that they will give no other orders until water is produced that the hotelier acknowledges defeat. Finally, when water is served it is in a little decanter, not enough for one person, with one glass for a party. Once in a while, especially in Italy, there is an exception to the exasperations of this anti-water crusade of the publicans. In London and Paris the

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

carafe—never a pitcher—may at times be on the table, but its stale contents taste of smoke.

A direct effect of this scarcity of plain water in European hotels and restaurants is, what the landlords desire, a bottle of strong drink or alleged spring water in front of every guest during a meal. A person of ordinary diffidence, or vanity, has not the nerve to refuse to be imposed upon in this way. The abstainer is made aware of the fact that he is *persona non grata* to both waiter and landlord, and a black sheep in the flock under their charge. The absurdity of this situation is heightened when the venders of bottled water and their agents, the hotel and restaurant keepers, systematically throw doubts on the purity of the water from city supplies. On this point I heard a physician, interrogated in London, make this statement: "The death-rate, especially of children, will indicate the source of disease in a public water-supply, if any exists. The sufficient reply to the allegations as to danger in the water furnished a community is the common steady decrease in the death-rate and the diseases consequent upon impurity in drinking-water. In London, whose water-supply is decried by the publicans, children drink only water, and with impunity. On the other hand, the dangers in the indiscriminate drinking of so-called table waters must be obvious when one but reads their labels. Like medicines, they are meant for various purposes."

When talking on the subject of water with Europeans, I noticed frequently that their faces took on a blank look of incredulity when I said that on the table

## WATER AND AIR AT A PREMIUM

in all public eating-places in America there stands, as one of the accepted appointments, a big pitcher of cold, fresh water; that at the public bars water is served free, or the customer may help himself; that in business-houses and offices generally and in many public and semi-public places water is provided in a cooler for all who wish to drink. American "publicans" have not yet dreamed of "cornering" water as against the thirsty stranger. Were it attempted there would be an instant revolt, and the violence attending it may be inferred from how mad American travellers continually show themselves when encountering the difficulties of getting a drink of water while making the great tour of Europe.

Throughout those parts of Europe I saw it seemed that people stood in dread and horror of heaven's pure air. "Hermetically sealed!" some of our party would exclaim as we entered any enclosure whatever—business office, hotel bedroom, public dining-room, church, street-car, but especially the compartment of a railway "carriage." In the hotel chambers the bedsteads invariably stood in the farthest end from the windows, the pillows in the remotest corner, and the chambermaid's last act at night would be to close the outside shutters and the windows, and let down the shades, and draw together the heavy dark curtains. How the clerks could get the breath to keep at work in the business offices I at times visited I could not see, every precaution being taken to exclude the outside air. Occasionally on entering a street-car one of our party would let down a window, to meet at once

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

an opposition from shivering enemies to ozone. At night in big cities I have walked kilometers past residences without seeing a single open window or other evidence of ventilation. A highly educated European wedded to an American lady told me that until his marriage he had never heard of people sleeping with their bedroom windows open. The narrow European railway carriage compartments at night are manufactories of scents having the strength of knock-out drops. These little dog-kennels then have doors and windows tightly shut, and woe betide the American who tries to open either by the tenth of an inch. He clashes immediately with immovable public opinion.

The most probable theory I heard advanced with regard to this avoidance by the Continental nations of air unadulterated by human contact was that it was the result of their contest with the inclemencies of climate. In the greater part of Europe the weather is damp and cool most of the year. The houses are consequently chilly, the price of fuel being too high to permit of steady artificial heating. Hence to save fuel people clad themselves warmly; and when their apartments are heated they close in the warmer and exclude the cooler air, thus becoming accustomed to an over-breathed composite in which pure atmosphere is the weakest constituent element. But this explanation hardly covers the whole ground. In Italy the night air was spoken of as miasmatic, and hence to be dreaded. Whatever the origin of airophobia, the disease is to Americans one of the most remarkable among the social phenomena to be observed in Europe.



## WATER AND AIR AT A PREMIUM

The vitiated air of European theatres is but a part of their general badness. Exceptions always, of course. There must be some fine theatres in every country in Europe, but I believe that I saw a fair average of those open in the months of my trip, and I was able to see only passable ones at the best. For comfort to the audience, price of admission, wholesomeness in the plays, compensation to actors and employes—in a word, as a social institution—the theatre in Europe in general “can’t hold a candle” to our great, clean, progressive American places of amusement. The auditorium of the Continental theatres or opera-houses, with its three or four galleries of stuffy *loges* is the remotest extreme from the prevailing American construction, the aim of which is a view of the stage for every one in the audience, a circulation of fresh air, a democratic opposition to the exclusiveness of caste and safety in case of accident. When I went to the theatre or opera in any city I selected the best performances at the moment on the boards. Nearly all I saw were wretchedly bad, morally and artistically—bad to a degree intolerable to American audiences. In Vienna I partly sat through a performance at the Prater Varieties which for silliness and smut I never saw equalled in America; withal, the play was presented with actors and scenery of about the grade of a ten-cent barker’s show at Coney Island. In Rome, at the National Theatre, one of the principal houses, an operetta given by a numerous company, the scenes of which were laid in the United States, was so ludicrously bad, in costumes and characters,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

acting and singing, that it drew tears of laughter from the Americans in the audience. I mention these two performances but as examples: Except at one house in Berlin, the vaudeville I saw was uniformly far below the American average.

✓ But, the critical reader may inquire: "Is this a labor question?" The answer must be that it is, from several points of view. To enable the inquirer to see that it is, his attention is called to the fact that one of the leading working-men's societies in New York has a standing committee which visits the various local theatres and passes upon the fitness of the plays to be visited by the parents and children who make up the masses. Here is recognized the principle that the wage workers, who so greatly need wholesome amusement, demand what is best from the stage, which not infrequently is the people's only source of social instruction—a combination of college and church. The majority both of actors and audience are wage workers of some grade. The popularity, degree of development, and standards of morality of the presentations of the American theatre reflect the ideas of the bulk of our people—and these are the workers.

✓ In drawing comparisons between certain European and American manners and customs I have constantly in mind the influence of the people in general upon the development of society in the two worlds. There is always one difference to be kept in mind: in the United States "we are the people"; in Europe "the people" are still often regarded by the hereditary dominant classes as mere hewers of wood and drawers

## WATER AND AIR AT A PREMIUM

of water. The higher wages paid and better conditions in America are the result of no accident; they are largely the acquisitions of bodies of men who aspire to them and know how to struggle for them. So also the character of the American masses stands revealed in American institutions. That character, I believe, I see in clear and direct relation with popular education as to such matters as the proper use of water and air and also with the influence of society upon the morals of the stage. I can go further in venturing an opinion: it is that very probably the American wage workers' conception of the future perfected social organization differs from the ideal state of the Socialists because of his superior advantages over the European working man as a judge of what constitutes beneficent social development.

## THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE

WASHINGTON, D. C., *October 26, 1909.*

✓ INQUIRIES reach me from various sources in America relative to the conditions of the working-classes in Europe. The questions as put are not easily answered. They are nearly all too general, and in replying to them I can give for the most part either impressions only or my view of facts as seen broadly. Naturally, however, when in my own special field of labor organization I feel the more sure of all the grounds for any of my statements.

In the letter I wrote after being in England only a week I spoke of coming in contact there with "a social atmosphere, situation, and conflict an ocean apart from ours" in America. This sense of being in another world, and again another, and still another, came upon me as I travelled from country to country. Under each Government there appeared a new set of social problems that, for the time at least, were uppermost, reflecting the passing stage of the political, religious, or economic development of the people affected. In all countries necessarily the deeper questions affecting wealth, its production and distribution, formed a common theme for discussion. Associated with the privileges of wealth, in the eyes of

## THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE

the classes in revolt, are the hereditary privileges of the "detainers of wealth" both in social life and law-making; that is, caste in Europe signifies not only social exclusiveness, but whatever of feudalism has not been abolished.

To the American it is astonishing how much vested power remains in the hands of the "upper classes" of Europe. In nearly all countries to be a Republican—or the same thing, a Democrat—is to be a "malcontent." The fundamental articles of political faith to the American citizen are regarded by rank and wealth in the Old World as social heresies. To be "loyal to the King," or Kaiser, or Emperor, is the test of a "faithful subject." Hence, the closely knit rings of the titled nobility, with their hordes of dependents, parasites, and imitators, are ranged against the rising mass of the people.

In the German army, for example, are nearly thirty thousand officers. Few of them can afford to champion the cause of the "lower orders of society." From their supercilious bearing in public and from common reports as to their class prejudices and manner of life, precious few ever think of doing so. The working-classes regard them as fomenters of war, allies of the titled aristocracy, willing servants of the capitalists in time of labor disputes, and enemies of the social progress that comes through peace. The very fact that marriage is forbidden to a German army officer unless he or his intended wife has a stated income, aside from his pay, "sufficient to maintain one of his rank," points to snobbery, parasitism, and fortune-hunting. Thus

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

from every point of view the German army officers form one of the main buttresses to the feudal conception of society as against the democratic—or American—system. Between the commissioned officer and the common soldier is an immeasurable chasm. On contemplating it the observer learns what is signified in Europe by the word “caste.”

The hatred toward the socially privileged classes entertained by the masses in monarchical countries is voiced just as frequently in condemning their hereditary class powers as their hereditary wealth. Their very titles, forever paraded before the public, nauseate democracy. The democratic newspapers boycott not only these titles, but also mention of the comings and goings of their vainglorious bearers. It is to be remembered that the German soldier is such by compulsion; he has not, like the American soldier, voluntarily taken on his uniform, nor are the officers, as are more than half in our army, promoted from the ranks or transferred from civil life. Similarly the high posts in the public service, instead of being the gifts of the people, are still frequently rewards to favorites of powerful families. With this fact comes the insistence upon social distinctions by the well placed, distinctions carried by a pettiness of spirit into the commonest relations of life. In Germany “Herr Professoren” and “Frau Doctorinnen,” and in Italy “Comendatore” and “Cavalieri,” are thicker than “Colonels” in Kentucky, with the difference that they expect to be taken seriously as “upper class” social luminaries. In England the habit of calling a salaried man in

## THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE

a commercial house by his surname, "Johnson," or "Bobbs," or "Smith," while the youngest scion of a stockholder is "Mr.," indicates the subtleties of caste that for a lifetime may irritate a man with a man's rights and feelings.

In France it is not only servants who are expected to address the upper-caste individual in the third person "Monsieur" instead of "you." The janitors of Paris have struck against this custom of the late empire. In Great Britain non-payment of members of Parliament by the State is a negation of the rights of the masses of wage earners to be represented by men from their own ranks. To a prevailing measure the House of Commons is, as commonly observed, a gentlemen's club—the word "gentleman" to be taken in the English sense of a high-caste man, and not in the American sense of a manly man. The first, second, third, and fourth class cars on European railways do not merely indicate varying costs in a journey; they mark off strata in society. The fact that army officers and certain high-grade government functionaries have the right to travel in first-class cars at third-class rates is used by the democrats to illustrate the parasitic privileges of aristocracy in general. I witnessed an instance in which two respectable-looking women with a child were objected to on entering a second-class car by a haughty and overbearing man, though they apologized for taking the last seats in the compartment. "They are servants," he said, as if they were animals. "They have no right to be seated with us." The habitual tone of the conservative

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

European Press when dealing with social questions suggests the idea that the wage workers are the dependent wards of the employing class; therefore the assertion of the latter of their supposed rights is a form of treason. The street-cars of Amsterdam and other European cities have first and second class compartments. The one is empty or nearly so, the other jammed.

In America we are taught that all citizens should have equal rights, and that the man who will not stand up for his rights is unworthy of citizenship; in Europe, powerful, if not in all countries the dominant, elements of society defend the rights of kings as divine, advise the poor to be satisfied in "the station in which God has placed them"; they also teach that the separation of Church and State is a sacrilege, and assume that the aggressive upward movement of the masses is a peril to society.

1. This difference in the prevailing sentiment toward democracy I regard as the first point to be made in comparing the conditions of the wage workers in Europe and America. A complete change in this respect must be the forerunner in Europe to a general social progress. More than any other factor, the labor organizations are working this change. They are evolving a "triumphant democracy."

2. The political disabilities of the European working-classes also mark the incompleteness of the abolition of serfdom. As in the feudal times, power in most countries is in a large measure still in the hands of a set of hereditary or propertied bosses, whatever their



## THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE

titles. In Hungary, on account of the property qualifications, not one wage worker in twenty has a vote. Hungarian working-men who have been in the United States and have returned to their native country can, from their own experience, make comparisons between the two governments on the points affecting the wage workers as citizens. Those I met invariably began by showing the differences in the suffrage. The sentiments of the masses have but a small influence on the Hungarian Government. Their efforts through labor organizations to promote their welfare are constantly hindered by interferences from the authorities. The common-school question, long ago settled in the United States favorably to the working-classes, who were capable of protecting their own interests through the ballot, cannot be grappled with by the Hungarian working-people because they are without the ballot. Four-fifths of the so-called public elementary schools of that country are still denominational.

The average Englishman would probably maintain that while Hungary represents the lowest level of European society with respect to the citizen's rights in voting and to a free schooling, England is at the highest level or very nearly the highest. But in the larger English cities from 25 to 40 per cent of the wage workers have no vote on any public question whatever. They fail in residential, tax-paying, or other qualifications. A working-man, in all other ways qualifying, may lose his vote for two years by removing from one municipality to another only a few miles away. Plural voting gives property an advantage

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

over mere man. The distribution of seats in Parliament is by no means yet exempt from rotten borough features. Apart from voting for Members of Parliament and City and County Councilmen, the masses of English voters have no direct influence over public officials. The democrats among them have to put up with the standing offence of royalty and the lords. And in England, to speak up for free and secular education in State-maintained schools is to classify one's self as a radical.

In Germany, however advanced the common schools, their relation to "higher" education is not what it is in America. It is not common, as here, that wage workers procure a college education with direct connection with the common-school course. As to the effectiveness of the ballot, if a fair apportionment of seats were made the Socialists and other radicals of Germany would at the next election increase their membership in the Reichstag by perhaps 50 per cent. Aside from voting for members of the Reichstag, the German working-man has little or no influence on those who govern him, except by his trade-union activity.

In Austria the trade-unionist has by the letter of the law no legal status. The act of 1870 on combinations forbids workingmen's unions to accumulate funds to be used in labor disputes. Consequently, the trade unions, as labor organizations, do not pay strike or lockout benefits. The members take care of this branch of their work through "free organizations," associated with their unions and administered by the

## THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE

union officials. Any citizen may join these organizations of course, but the union members are the only ones who commonly do. Members of the union are obliged to pay dues to the "free organization." Here is a legal farce impossible to the working-classes of the United States. It marks one of the widest differences between the conditions of the workers in our own country and conditions to be found in Europe.

The European working-man's identification book is a badge of his still existing serfhood. While in America any one may freely roam the country over, in most countries in Europe the laborer must be prepared to produce his "legitimation" book on demand of the police or on applying for employment. At the Paris Congress of the International Secretariat one of the protests drawn up related to the arbitrary action of the Prussian police in turning back at the frontier Austrian laborers going to seek work in Prussian-Germany, or in imposing upon them both entrance and police taxes. In Italy the laborer's book, besides giving his character as a workman, as seen by his successive employers, states whether he has ever been in prison for any cause whatever for more than ten days. The "labor agitator," subject to police hounding, is thus liable to be effectually squelched.

It is through the exercise of a man's rights—his personal rights and his rights as a citizen—that in time he may attain to their full extent his economic rights. Hence, in comparing laboring-class conditions in Europe with those in America, I have placed first some consideration of the extent to which what we regard

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

as the fundamental rights of men are exercised in the Old World and in the New.

✓Americans have manhood suffrage. By it they may, if they will, amend Federal or State constitutions, change all their lawmakers and office-holders, and speedily bring the laws up to the mental and moral level of the majority. Not even in England can the masses do as much. The House of Lords, among other obstacles, stands in the way. If royalty is not regarded as one of the obstacles it is because royalty effaces itself. The British nation as a whole seems disposed to tolerate the conventional figurehead of kingship, so long as it remains nothing more.

✓Americans exercise the right of devoting their lifetime to their own pursuits and purposes. On the Continent of Europe every man in the masses must give up years of his life to compulsory service in the army. Under some governments the poorer and more ignorant and helpless the man the longer is his term of service. Exemptions go to the favored classes. An endless stream of wrongs and infamies flows from militarism as carried out by the ruling classes in the great powers.

✓Americans are not taxed to support religious denominations to which they are opposed. This cannot be said of the "subjects" of the British Government. State religions, or the usual alliances between Church and State, have been one of the prime causes of the revolutionary sentiment throughout Europe.

✓Americans enjoy the right to at least an elementary education. The praises of the American school sys-

## THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE

tem are heard among the wage workers in all countries of Europe. The national schools of England as compared with the common schools of America are not equally in the service of all the people. Differences arise from sectarianism, caste, organization, and conception of the purposes of the schools. To hear an Italian speaking in broken English acquired in America of the American school system and contrasting Italy's methods with America's, is to hear a lesson upon the rights of children, as much to be relished by Americans as it should be profitable to Italians.

✓American working-men assume and assert the right of the organization of labor as a matter of course. In nearly all Continental countries the right is hampered with police or other regulations against which trade-unionists rebel. In some countries, as in Hungary and Austria, the right is only encompassed by trick and subterfuge. In Italy, as in Germany, it has been gained and is maintained only through constant struggles. Labor organizations in France, legitimate only since 1884, fight constantly against compulsory incorporation and similar attacks upon a just liberty.

✓Americans exercise the right of free assembly. What this means seems difficult sometimes for foreign-bred naturalized American citizens to understand. But in actual practice, immigrants to this country from Russia, Spain, Austria, Hungary, Germany, and Ireland can bear witness to America's larger liberty in this respect. Nowhere in the world may men assemble freely to mob a man's house or person or to preach violent revolution; but in America men may

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

meet and devise overturning the Government and expelling from office its heads by ballot and not lose their standing as conservative citizens. In the countries named they would be classed as dangerous extremists.

✓Americans practice the right of movement from place to place without let or hindrance. This is not known to the laboring-classes in Europe. A laboring-man in America when travelling may feel that he is a man; in Europe he is presumably a possible vagrant, pauper, or subject for police surveillance.

✓Americans have a right to trial by a jury of their peers that is rarely known to working-men in European countries. Judges not elected by the people are harsh interpreters of the law when trying the poor and defenceless if opponents are of the privileged classes. The savage attitude of German magistrates toward the Socialists is proverbial; the severity of English judges in cases of poaching or similar petty offences against property exhibits a settled principle of putting defence of possessions above consideration for human beings; the travesty of a trial for Ferrer proved to what lengths monarchy is capable of going in judicial or military murder of its opponents.

✓Americans exercise a great, though frequently overlooked, right in supervising their public servants and making them aware of the possibility of dismissal on wrong-doing. In Europe members of the titled aristocracy may be worthless to the community, flagrantly immoral, opponents to general progress, self-interested promoters of war, social pests from many points of

## THE OPPRESSED MASSES IN EUROPE

view, and still retain power as lawmakers and stand as social leaders otherwise.

✓ And, finally, Americans have constitutionally guaranteed a free Press and the right of free speech.

The European social reformer is often confused regarding the American political and economic situation because he cannot understand that much for which he has yet to struggle has in this country been accomplished. The basic principles of liberty are here recognized in the law. The principle of equality before the law is established. If all the logical results from these principles do not invariably follow, the fault lies with those American citizens who do not defend their rights as free men should.

## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 2, 1909.*

"WHERE are wages best?" working-men ask me. "Other points in favor of America don't count for much if a man's earnings here can't bring him a better living than in European countries. Is it true that a mark in Germany or a franc in France will go as far as a dollar in the United States?"

In reply, some examples of wages in Europe may be given and then some description of the circumstances in the European workmen's situation as I took note of them. Precisely what the differences are in the cost of living in the different countries is a question involving many factors over which sociological investigators and tariff-wranglers have long disputed. What I can give is the result of visiting workmen in their homes in various cities, hearing the statements of labor representatives and others as to prices and wages, and completing this sort of information with comparisons of wage-scales and trade-union reports given me in the countries I visited.

In the debates and conferences at the British Trade-Union Congress at Ipswich in September, the national trade-union secretaries and other prominent delegates



## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

could hardly be expected to err greatly when referring to earnings in their own occupations. Some of their statements are herewith given. Richard Bell, M.P., of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, speaking of the necessity for railway men in the Ipswich district to come into the unions, said that while working at 17 shillings (\$4.25) a week, they had refused to assist the union in getting them an advance of 2 shillings. It is to be kept in mind that the English shilling is really twenty-four American cents, though usually computed at twenty-five. G. H. Roberts, M.P., averred that in some parts of East Anglia, the eastern-central part of England, agricultural laborers are being paid 12 shillings a week. Will Thorne, M. P., mentioned that builders' laborers in Ipswich were receiving 4½ pence (9 cents) an hour. Men in the audience called out, "Quite right, and three and one-half pence, sir." A. G. Smith, of the London Cab Drivers, said public motor-car men received 25 per cent on every pound they took in, but as they had to pay for their gasoline, which was often wasted, it frequently happened that all they had for themselves after a fifteen-hour day was 2 shillings. R. Davies, of the Municipal Employes, arguing for a recognized minimum in all industries, quoted the Ipswich trade-union minimum for builders' laborers as 5 pence per hour. A resolution was adopted advocating minimum wages of 30 shillings for a forty-eight-hour week for government workers in the London district, and 36 shillings in the danger buildings of the explosive factory in the arsenal at Woolwich.

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

These two demands, it is to be observed, which mark an objective point above what is paid, reach only \$7.50 and \$9 a week.

In London the present weekly union scale for men in the binding department in printing-offices is 34 shillings for fifty-four hours; for cutters, 30 shillings; and for girl folders, 15. In the private shipyards doing naval work—those in the Tyne, Clyde, Mersey, Thames, and Barrow districts—the wages run on the average: Platers, 38s. 3d.; riveters and caulkers, 34s. 9d.; holders-up, 28s. 3d. Government dockyards maximum pay is: Platers, 28s.; riveters and caulkers, 28s.; holders-up, 25s. The entire range here is \$6 to less than \$9.50.

The long hours worked in some occupations was called to the attention of the Congress. It was said by Alderman J. Hayhurst, J.P., of the Bleachers' Union, to be a common thing for men in the bleaching, dyeing, and calico-printing industries to work twelve and fourteen hours a day. Councillor G. T. Jackson, J.P., of the Tramway Employes' Union, introduced a resolution calling for an eight-hour lapse between the end of one day's work and the beginning of the next, and providing that any one day should not be spread over more than twelve hours. He told of an accident occurring at 11 P.M. through the exhaustion of a man who had begun work at 6 A.M. E. Spice, of the London Watermen, wanted twelve hours as a maximum day for the lads under eighteen working at lighterage on the Thames. A delegate of the tailors stated that women employed by a fashion-

## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

able Regent Street firm worked eighty-four hours a week for 3 pence an hour.

In the foregoing figures we have for England examples not only of the highest wages paid in some of the best-organized trades, but also of the rates current in those poorly organized. In other words, the range covers the varying scales for all wage workers' occupations. Further quotations would carry but the repetition of what is a general fact. Earnings in England, however, cannot be based on weekly wage-scales; unemployment, varying as to the individuals involved, is now so bad as to be spoken of as a settled national feature in industry. The Inspector-General of the army was quoted at Ipswich as mentioning in his last annual report that ninety out of every one hundred men enlisting in the army had given unemployment as their reason for becoming soldiers.

A general survey of wages in Germany is to be had in the tables giving the average yearly earnings as reported under the working-men's insurance laws. The *Correspondenzblatt* of the Trade-Union General Commission for Germany, April 18, 1908, page 55, has one of these tables. Only three or four of the trades average over 1200 marks (\$300), at which sum, according to the law, begins the excess reckoned at one-third the actual amount. Most of the averages run less than 1000 marks (\$250). These general insurance statistics of wages may be verified by union scales. For instance, the Berlin saddlers' organization calls for 27 to 28 marks a week; the Hamburg shipbuilders, 34 to 50 marks; the Berlin plumbers,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

60 to 70 pfennigs an hour for a nine-hour day, be it \$8 to \$9 a week. These are among the highest wages. The lowest are for day laborers, which rarely go above 3 marks a day and sometimes below  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in a list compiled by the local authorities in thirty cities in accordance with the insurance laws.

In Austria and Hungary wages run, as seen by the American eye, accustomed to dollars, at about equal levels for the two countries, high in big cities and low in agricultural districts. The leading industry of Hungary is flour-milling. Budapest millers boasted to me that their mills were better than those of Minneapolis. A few years ago, before the workmen were organized, mill wages varied, one giving but 50 cents a day for work that in other mills brought 80. The pay for skilled millers, while more nearly uniform, averages now less than the latter figure. In Budapest, bricklayers, among the best-paid workmen in the building trades, get \$1 to \$1.20 a day. In the winter they find unskilled work at 60 cents. First-class carpenter-joiners earn \$1.30 to \$1.90. Budapest has a thousand female cigar-makers working in the government factories at 30 to 40 cents a day. Miners in North Hungary sometimes attain to the level of 60 cents.

The wages in Italy reach their highest point in Milan, the great modern commercial and industrial city of the kingdom. In 1907 the following were some of the demands of the unions: The painters and paper-hangers, a minimum of 60 cents, 80 cents, and \$1 a day (American money), eight and a half hours in the winter and ten the rest of the year; stationary fire-

## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

men, 9 cents an hour; gold-leaf workers, \$1.20; assistants, 75 cents, nine hours; bookbinders, 10 per cent advance for the men making 80 cents a day, 15 per cent for hands making 50 to 80 cents, 22 per cent. for those making 30 to 50; masons and assistants in the building trades, minimum per hour, 9 cents; apprentices, 7- $\frac{3}{4}$ ; laborers, 6; boys, 4; lithographers, graded, \$8.40, \$7.80, \$7 a week; street-cleaners, graded, 78, 72, 67, 60, 45 cents a day.

The trade unions are much stronger in Milan than elsewhere in Italy. Wages taper off southward, the unions, of course, also diminishing in number and importance. The building trades in the south have wages only 60 to 70 per cent of those paid in Milan, as recorded at the union national headquarters.

Quotations from my notes on union wage-scales for the smaller countries, such as Belgium, Switzerland, and Bohemia (the latter having its own national labor movement), would give slight variations of wages, somewhat between the Italian and English or German levels. As I have said, the American mind, accustomed to make estimates in dollars, cannot easily appreciate differences that to the European workman may appear considerable. To be told that the policemen in London get \$6 to \$9 a week, in Paris \$6 to \$8, in Vienna or Rome \$5 to \$7, leaves the man who has acquaintances on the New York force at \$20 and \$30 only under the impression that all European policemen are cheap, an impression deepened after he has tipped a London policeman sixpence for hunting a cab for him ten minutes or a Vienna policeman five

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

cents for giving information as to his baggage at a railway station.

In Europe it is a matter of great astonishment that our women school-teachers can afford to make "the grand tour" on their own savings. Scores, perhaps hundreds, of our bright instructresses to-day make the two ocean voyages for \$100, and travel to London, Paris, the Rhine, perhaps Berlin and Rome, during six or seven or even ten weeks, for \$250 more. The young European mechanic or laborer, home again after two or three years in America, smartly clothed and flush in spending-money, perhaps back to be married, is a common subject for neighborhood gossip in Europe, whether he is the printer in Liverpool, the miner in Westphalia, the cigar-maker in Prague, or the "excavator" in Naples. Such facts, elusive to the census-taker, tell a story of their own.

The printing trade, in all Europe at the highest point in union organization, affords a basis for wage comparisons. In New York the union weekly scale for compositors on morning newspapers is \$31; on book work, \$21.00. In London the book scale is 39 shillings (less than \$9.50); in Paris, the minimum, \$9; in Milan, \$7 (5.20 lire per day); in Austria the towns and cities are divided into six classes for compositors' weekly wages, running, respectively, \$4.40, \$4.80, \$5.20, \$5.60, \$5.80, and \$6.20; in Budapest the minimum scale is \$4.80. The custom of paying the best hands more than the minimum scale is more prevalent in European countries than in America. The briefest mention of the printing business, with comparison of

## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

wages, requires notice of the fact that machinery, and that of the first order, in the press and composing rooms, is in more common use in America than in any European country. I was shown through a model book and job printing-office in London that had no composing-machines, and the Cologne *Zeitung*, the great daily newspaper of Rhenish Germany, has none. Seldom are any seen in the many co-operative establishments. They are rare in the offices of Austria, Hungary, and Italy. I am reliably informed that more type is set in one daily newspaper office in a week in New York than in all the printing-offices of Naples. That fact is in agreement with the rule that with high wages in America there is often a low cost of production, coming from the education and energy of the workers, perfected machinery, and organization on a large scale.

My facts indicate that money wages in America in many trades are at least double those paid abroad.

But the cost of living?

Two classes of writers and talkers may be found who assert that "one may live in Europe on half what it costs in America." The first of these classes is the employers of Europe as a body; they are interested in keeping their workmen with them, to compete with one another, besides being actuated by anti-American sentiment that calls for no more than mention here. The other class is mostly made up of well-to-do American sojourners abroad. The latter undoubtedly find several items in their own outlay less than in America, among them being personal service, objects of luxury,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

and their house-rents. As relating to themselves and their social class, their assertions are correct, especially as regards city life. The European working-classes, however, neither hire servants nor buy articles of luxury except in rare cases. The struggle for a barely decent living is ever before them. Their necessary annual family "budget" comprises plain and cheap food, which, on the average, takes 40 to 65 per cent of the entire outlay, quarters in either an "industrial" or "slum" district, requiring 20 to 35 per cent, and clothing 10 per cent or more. These percentages must be indefinite, depending as they do upon the size of the family, on earnings and on climate, and even on the Government. Mentally contemplating the many cities I visited, and having in mind the conversations I had with working-men who had lived both in Europe and America, I believe I may assert that whether the cost of living in Europe or America is greater to the working-man depends entirely on the standard of living he adopts while in America. If he voluntarily lives the life of self-denial in this country that he compulsorily lived in his native land, his outlay in money will remain about the same. Even then he will hardly be able to escape gaining something from the superior supply of the good things of life in America.

If I am called on to name one of the good things which is conspicuous, I reply: "Our common schools for the workers' children," and as I write the words I hear again the enthusiastic sentiments on this point uttered in my presence by Italians, Bohemians, Aus-



## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

trians, and Irishmen. "To think," they say, "your country gives even the school-books free!"

Living is cheap to the wage worker in Europe only because he does without what in America soon becomes a necessity to him—food in good quantity and quality, presentable clothes among his aspiring fellow-workmen and their families, and a comfortably furnished home in quarters responding to his awakened desires for equality with his American neighbors, and in general a larger, fuller, and freer life.

"How often do these people eat meat?" is a question the American in Europe finds himself asking when looking about among wage workers. Meat is usually from 25 to 100 per cent higher in price than in the United States. Naples and vicinity is often spoken of as offering plentiful and cheap living. Within the customs-bonded district of the port of Naples are large cold-storage warehouses whence meat is furnished to vessels in the American and Mediterranean service. It is American meat. If it could be carted just one hundred yards from the warehouse through the gates of the great iron customs department fence into Naples, this meat could be sold at from 25 to 50 per cent below local prices. The warehouse owners stand ready to do business with all Italy, furnishing a better grade of meat at greatly reduced prices, if the tariff barrier were removed. This is but a single illustration of a general fact. Staple American agricultural products—wheat, fruits, cheese—in many parts of Europe are sold at lower than the local prices or as low. The immigrant coming to America finds that

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

if he can buy in quantity (and in cases where he need not) his flour, fuel, potatoes, oil, sugar, coffee, salt—the essentials for his plain table—all cost less than they ordinarily do in the land he left. The cheapness and abundance of many varieties of fruits and of our melons and tomatoes is a surprise to him. Closely after the most pressing necessities comes a line of things cheaper than in Europe: cotton clothing, including overalls, jumpers, shoes (the American shoe has a sale all over the Continent); newspapers, the cent buying twice to four times the reading-matter contained in a German, French, or Italian paper. Access to good water renders expenditure for alcoholic drinks less necessary. The cheapness of good amusements in America deserves more attention than has been given the subject by the professional investigator; it is a social factor having an enormous influence on the tastes and education of the working-class public. The possibility of regarding outlay for amusements as one of the regular items in family expenses is an indication of the working-class standard of living.

How the wage earners and their families attire themselves is not so much a question of the cheapness of clothing as it is of what is left over for this purpose after provision has been made for food, shelter, and other unavoidable family needs. The factors of climate, national customs, and class standards must also be considered. In Southern countries, where the same clothes are worn the year around, people may appear well in public at half the expense required in America, in the North, where there are four seasons.

## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

In the United Kingdom the poor dress in much the same clothing summer and winter, the large proportion of the people in shabby clothes in the streets of Dublin, Manchester, or London giving an impression to the American observer of a prevalent poverty.

The masses make a better appearance in Paris and Berlin. In Italy a young fellow may be a dandy in a straw hat and a cotton duck suit. Fine wool and silk stuffs, furs, laces, and kid gloves cost less abroad than in the United States—a fact, however, which bears as lightly in an inquiry into the conditions of the masses as does the tariff on the masterpieces of art.

The housing of the wage workers of the various European countries as compared with that of the same class in America would, in order to bring out the full truth, require a long and faithful study. When the facts were ascertained, the real point remaining would be how to present them in order to create an exact impression of the truth. Besides, in making comparisons a difficulty would be in fixing an American standard. Conditions exist in a few American cities, such as New York, Pittsburg, and Chicago, representing neither European nor American standards, but what are created through the transition of the most helpless of our newly arrived immigrants from a state perhaps more miserable than that in which they lived in their native countries to a level equal to the financially lowest that is permanent among the American-born citizens. Looking at the housing problem widely, the greatest fact in favor of America is space. The working-man in the country towns and in the cities smaller

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

than those in which the foreign population is congested can rent or perhaps buy a separate home. In general, Europe does not give this opportunity. For example, Bremen is the only considerable city in Germany which has small single-family houses adapted to the needs of working-people. Only the big tenement-house, except in rare cases, is to be found in other cities. The wage earner in them is regarded as permanently a rent-payer, an animal in a stall in a five, six, or seven story stable. No, not one animal in one stall — not so good as that; whole families or a herd of lodgers live in one of the stalls. The doubling-up of families of relatives, the keeping of lodgers, the hiring of a small apartment by several young persons, such devices for distributing among many persons the burdens of rent must be general in cities where apartments are made the landlord's investment and few small homes are built to sell the man with a small purse. The barracks-like houses of the German cities are planned so as to accommodate people in comparatively easy circumstances in the desirable apartments of the front, up to the fourth story, while the basement and the small rear and topmost apartments go to the swarm of folks living on low wages. Berlin has been called "The city that wears a dickey," since its imposing streets of big dwelling-houses have the best apartments on view to the front, behind being shabbiness and the general unattractiveness of things unseen. In the northern district of Berlin is the new "working-men's quarter," with broad streets, window-garden houses, and evidences of municipal care as to

## WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

hygiene, one result being that rents, compared with wages, run close to the high American level.

In no city in Europe did I find rents any cheaper, wages considered, than they run in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Louisville, or in the New England towns not having a boom, or even in many cities of the Mississippi basin. What strikes the American is how little the European renting wage worker gets for his money. Very seldom indeed has he a bit of garden; he takes a poor water service for granted; his rooms are fewer and smaller than is ordinarily the case in an American house. The rent-payer is usually a rent-payer for life. No institution of the proportion of the American building-and-loan association exists in any European country. The movement of large masses from the position of rent-payers to that of householders has been characteristic of America. European philanthropists, statesmen, and co-operators are at the present time endeavoring to establish the necessary methods to bring about American results.

Space here, to my regret, is insufficient to permit me to quote the rentals paid by wage workers in various European cities which are entered in my notes. I have been obliged to give my conclusions on the subject in general terms. The main conclusion as to housing is the same as that relating to food: If the immigrant to this country is willing to continue living here at the same level he was obliged to accept in his native land, he can find it for the same money.

## CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING

WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 9, 1909.*

THE masses in Europe are worse off than the masses in America; of that general fact the emigration from Europe would stand as one sufficient proof if others were wanting. But are the workers of Europe worse off to-day than they were a decade ago?

The European working-man may have reasoned that the two widely different economic levels at which he and his American brother have been accustomed to live must be due, not wholly to one or a few preponderating influences, but to many factors, among which some of the more important could be affected for better or worse in his own particular country by legislation, or even to a greater extent through his own action. The determining circumstances in social conditions, he could argue, do not exist through an unavoidable fatality; they arise as sequences to causes that are subject to change through both individual and social action. At all events, great masses of European working-men have taken this view.

To find out the faults in social organization which formed the immediate and remediable cause of the acute deprivation and suffering to which the propertyless classes were subjected, and to correct those faults

## CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING

or to diminish their injurious effects, has been the aim of increasing groups of discriminating and practical men everywhere in Europe both in the wage earning and other classes of society. For the period of a generation these groups have been at work through their respective deliberately chosen methods. Comparison can therefore be made between the conditions of the masses to-day and of twenty-five years ago, and report upon the results of various efforts at social improvement be drawn up in definite terms. Judgment in the light of the facts may also be passed upon that social philosophy which teaches on the one hand that "things must be worse before they can become better," and on the other that "society is witnessing an inevitable progressive impoverishment of the masses," the end of which can only be, some time, suddenly, "the social revolution."

During my tour in Europe I spoke with many men who once accepted the pessimistic view of the destiny of society as at present organized, but who now advocate its gradual improvement through the suppression of its injustices as occasion arises and through the further development of those movements and institutions that already contribute to the common welfare. With the change in their theory and consequently the basis of their activities, these men have become free to look upon social phenomena as they really are, and not as they ought to be to fit in with the preconceived idea of cumulative misery to the workers and disaster to the present social system. It is at the same time true that many such men remain to some extent en-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

gaged in the practical political work associated with the pessimistic movement. This is to be explained, however, by the contradiction between the hopeless philosophy of the doctrinaires of the Socialist political party and the inevitably ameliorative character of a part of its work. A member of the party may acknowledge that the theory of an economic trend toward conditions worse and still worse until the explosion must come has been disproved by time, and that the co-operative State as a conception is but an illusive dream. But he may remain a hard-working "comrade" because his co-workers have already got together in the party, because of the benefits arising from its local or national immediate programs, and because other parties are led by the enemies of democratic progress.

With men of these opportunist views, as well as with radicals upholding the extreme individualistic ideals of a new social order, and also with professional-class observers of social movements, I have discussed my appreciation of the facts in the European working-class situation, with the result that usually all have expressed themselves in agreement with its substantial truth. In brief, I give it herewith.

First in order, both in importance and in the march of events, is the fact of the solidarity to-day in the sentiment of the masses of Europe. They feel that great social changes must come soon; that the curtain has been rung down on the human comedy of government by, of, and for the classes; that the day of democracy is at hand, and that the struggle of the



## CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING

toilers for their own shall take precedence of those wars between nations which mean battles without cause between working-men. The grade of education already obtained by the millions for the first time in European history is having its results in producing hosts of men in the deprived classes capable of knowing their rights and defending them. The indefinite cry of "Working-men of all countries unite!" has been followed by the query, "On what basis?" evoking the answer, "On the sentiment of brotherhood." Hence, in the presence of an event such as the execution of Ferrer, differences of party platforms, of social philosophies, are sunk, and agreements in sympathies acted upon. The various resolutions of the International Secretariat on questions outstripping national boundaries are supported by Socialists, Anarchists, trade-unionists, and progressives in general, by men of various faiths as well as by those of no faith; the churches of every denomination are invited to act solely within their proper sphere; the anti-military feeling in its undercurrents is directed rather against the promoters of human fratricide than against a rational patriotism and the essentials of national defence. International blacklegging has become a question for universal trade-union activity instead of a continued incitation to inter-racial hatreds. The masses in all countries of Europe, now unfettered from serfdom's ignorance, have enlarged their mental horizon, become sympathetic with all who suffer like themselves, no matter where nature has cast their lot, and have been thrown into a state of social unrest which

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

only a general uplifting of their entire stratum of society can terminate.

Certain general forms of activity and public manifestation by social agitators that only twenty years ago were vigorously repressed are now tolerated by the governments of Europe. Compulsion is frequently exerted upon government authority itself instead of upon its opponents. Men in Austria who formerly were sent to jail for their democratic teachings are now sent to the Reichstag to give them utterance. Emblems of the people's aspirations once forbidden in public places are now daily carried in procession. Both Belgium and Austria have seen general strikes that extended the suffrage to large masses of the wage workers. The recent national strike in Sweden, aided by the labor organizations of all Europe, besides serving to correct abuses of power by employers, hastened the general international unity of the workers. It is remarkable that nearly every monarch in Europe at present seeks the reputation of being a social reformer. ✓ For recent positive and definite gains to the masses the observer must especially take account of trade-union achievement. Few are the industrial communities on the Continent in which labor organization on the English-American system has not had a marvelous development during the last ten years. / Germany has led. It now counts a solid trade-union membership of over eighteen hundred thousand. The professional sociologists, long in the habit of echoing the observation of their predecessors of twenty or thirty years ago that the German working-man turned to

## CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING

politics where the English or American went into the trade union, has recently discovered that what is really being done in Germany in practical work for the wage earners is directed from trade-union "centers." The new massive administration buildings of the unions in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Cologne, as examples, are striking material evidences of the wealth, power, and energy now possessed by the trade-unionists.

In these letters illustrations have already been given of the advances in wages and lessening in hours of work enforced by the united working-men of Germany. By the tourist one of the general effects of unionism is seen in the general closing of retail stores in German cities on Sundays and at eight o'clock in the evenings week-days. Tens of thousands of shop salesmen believe the world grew somewhat better when their work-week was reduced from eighty-four hours, as it was fourteen years ago when I visited Germany, to sixty hours now.

With the increased strength and consequent activity of the unions have come the usual results of the better enforcement of factory laws. The workmen, through their unions, see that the laws are posted in the factories and that employers observe the provisions applicable to women and children. Leading German trade-unionists assert positively that not until the unions themselves were capable of enforcing such laws were they generally carried out. To some extent the large cities of Austria, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, and Belgium have trade-union halls or co-operative buildings in which the unionists are the class chiefly

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

interested. Trade agreements, to carry out which labor organization is an indispensable feature, exist even in Hungary. In Munich 80 per cent of all the trades have standing contracts as to wages and workday with their employers. The men of the building trades of Italy, South Germany, Switzerland, and Austria have international exchange of cards, with uniform district wage-scales. In Germany the trade-unionists I interviewed had but one opinion as to the comparative rise of wages and of prices of the necessities of life: the wage line in the diagrams ran by far the highest.

One marked improvement was reported from the unions—alcoholic drinking was less common than formerly. Restaurant proprietors who formerly received from organizations a percentage of the receipts from the drinks sold had in not a few instances given up their privilege; in the halls of the unions deficits from the drinking-tables had to be made up from the dues. These were not the results from either prohibition or other sumptuary laws, but from labor organization and the consequent improved material condition of the workers.

✓ So runs the history of social betterments directly due to the unions. The working-men in Germany who are in position to send their children to school a year or two longer than once was the case, who dress their families better than ever, who live in improved tenements and who are saving something from their wages, know that the world has not grown worse for them.

A twelve-month ago the British Trade-Union Parlia-

## CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING

mentary Committee sent on a mission to Germany four of its members, labor representatives in Parliament, to inquire into the working-men's insurance systems of the empire. They reported in favor of the introduction of similar systems in the United Kingdom. The Liberal Government has consequently recognized the project of an insurance scheme providing four main features: (1) dues from employers and employed; (2) a supplementary subvention from the State; (3) insurances of trades; and (4) dues to be compulsory for employers and employed, skilled and unskilled. Had there not been obviously good results from the working-class insurance methods of Germany the representative English working-men would have condemned them. The British working-man has for several years experienced the advantages of a systematized legal compensation by employers in case of accident. He is now about to witness the establishment of government labor exchanges, somewhat on the German system. He is asking for insurance against unemployment, which has also had a trial in a few German municipalities. The question before us now is not whether insurance of this character could or should be applied in the United States. The fact of its establishment in some European countries demonstrates social progress there.

It is to be remembered that the pessimists in the Reichstag, their eyes directed toward the day of revolution, twenty years ago opposed the introduction of the working-men's insurance schemes now approved by overwhelming public opinion in all ranks in Ger-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

many. Equally, for decades they ranged themselves against trade-unionism as "an obstructionist palliative." And, to round out the inadaptability of their philosophy to a social evolution moving apace with an aroused public conscience and an age of ever new methods, they for years persistently refused to countenance attempts at voluntary co-operation. Time has in the latter respect again proved their error.

Next to trade-unionism, co-operation is making the greatest strides not only in Germany but throughout Europe. In Hamburg, as an instance, its evidences are remarkable. Every ward of this beautiful and magnificent city has monumental buildings devoted to some form of co-operation. The wholesale "center" is a large series of structures containing butcheries, bakeries, warehouses, offices of administration, a hotel, and an imposing row of modern apartment-houses occupied by wage workers. The building operations of the Hamburg Co-operative Society are carried into all forms of constructive work for not only the co-operators but the municipality and private investors. The society pays the highest wages in the city, practices profit sharing, and has in use noteworthy model appliances for the safety and welfare of its employes. Not only all the large industrial cities of Europe, even to Budapest, but many villages, now have active co-operative societies. In Italy the co-operative development is impressive. Milan has co-operative stores, printing-offices, newspapers, tenement buildings, and workmen's co-operative groups, and a central building, and even a hotel. In England

## CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING

and Scotland the advance of co-operation, wholesale, retail, and productive, is marked in its reports by millions of pounds every year. The British labor co-partnership movement now includes more than one hundred productive establishments, among them seventeen gas companies with twenty thousand employes. The Irish dairy and farming co-operative movement is helping on a large scale the small farmers by the thousands, as are the land-purchasing acts hundreds of thousands. The International Co-operative Alliance, with its biennial congress, serves to enlighten the people of all Europe with regard to co-operative methods as well as to promote the sentiments and arts of peace for the workers instead of those of hatred and destruction by war. Curiously, some of the upholders of compulsory co-operation by the coming State are prominent in promoting the work of voluntary co-operation now.

Nothing more significant presented itself to my eye as a tourist than the difference in appearance of the German cities between the time I visited them fourteen years ago and the present year. Accustomed as I long have been not to accept printed reports of working-class betterments through help of official authorities as final, I went in each city to what at the period of my previous visit were the slum districts. In some of the cities these have been about completely wiped out. For instance, in "picturesque" Hamburg the dirty narrow old streets, with their quaint sixteenth-century buildings, now exist chiefly on postal cards that recall the past. Fine open new

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

boulevards now run through quarters once the sorry refuge of the poorest stratum of society. In Berlin, in the northern section, a vast new working-class quarter has been developed. The streets in it are wide, the dwellings almost palatial outwardly, the apartments have modern equipments, and the general custom of balcony gardening imparts to block after block an inviting appearance. After visiting the interior of some of these houses, calling on the families of union men occupying apartments in them, hearing the stories of increased wages through labor organization, seeing the neatness of the housekeeping, and then driving for miles through this quarter, for me to believe that the working-classes of Berlin are in the grasp of a society inevitably doomed to destruction through ever-deepening poverty would be to reject an experimental appeal to my reason. And the same appeal is made in city after city in Germany.

The marked improvement in municipal management in Germany counts for something to the wage workers as a class. Cleaning up has gone on to the point of keeping highways, parks, and other outdoor public possessions permanently in good order. The ravages of disease, especially of tuberculosis, are steadily being fought down. The decreasing death-rate tells of diminished causes of suffering among the poor. The constant improvement in the German school system, with its extension to evening classes, manual training, and special courses, implies a development in working and earning capacity for the masses. And what is true in Germany appeared in



## CONDITIONS IN EUROPE IMPROVING

a large degree also true of Italy, France, and Switzerland, and to a lesser extent of Austria, Holland, and Belgium.

The investigator in European industrial centers may have his prejudices against charities, or trade-unionism, or municipal or State activities beyond his own theoretical limits; yet if he will but even rapidly take some visual cognizance of what these agencies are doing for the people he must admit that each has its own important place in social helpfulness. It is better that the homeless and the derelicts of a great city should find a bunk in one of the vast municipal or charitable lodging-houses than to wander the streets shelterless. It is better in a country where the poorest laborers have been accustomed to be wards of the authorities that municipal employment exchanges should care for the unskilled poor than that they should be exploited by private labor brokers or "padrones." It is well for the law to step in and specify what safety contrivances must be placed about the machinery in workshops rather than allow the employer to expose his employes to death or maiming. It is better that savings-banks should be operated or controlled by the Government than that the working-class group of depositors be left to the mercies of sharpers calling themselves bankers. In the advanced industrial European countries the public lodging-houses are reporting that sickness and hence death among the homeless are diminishing; public labor exchanges are not only finding work for untaught boys and men, but protecting poor women and girls from

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

the dangers of private agencies; municipal museums of protective methods against machinery and disease are teaching employers their duties and employes their rights in these respects, and the general savings funds are so continually increasing as to indicate a steadiness in working-class thrift.

There is no Paradise in Europe yet for the toilers. Far from it. Our question is not whether life is to their satisfaction, but whether, as asserted by the pessimists, in its general aspects it is becoming more intolerable. The philosophy teaching that the latter view must be the truth, promulgated with persistence by active apostles of social revolution, is in the name of an "unassailable economic science." Assent to or dissent from their teachings must follow the ascertained data relating to the question. My conclusions as to what the general pertinent facts are I have herewith submitted briefly to the rational and unprejudiced reader for his sober judgment and to the dreamer of the coming social cataclysm for his possible correction.

## TRADE-UNIONISM IN THE VARIOUS NATIONS

WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 16, 1909.*

The annual convention of the American Federation of Labor at Toronto has given renewed opportunity for those who are studying the world-wide organization of labor to see the differences between American and European trade unions and their methods of procedure. The chief characteristic of the American Federation in its form of organization is that there can be but one general union of wage-earners for each calling. Besides, it has no dependence in any way upon subsidies from States, municipalities, or philanthropic societies, has no affiliation with any political party, and exerts no power of administration over the international unions which are united in its name, each of these being autonomous.

The General Confederation of Labor in France (the "C. G. T.") is the furthest possible removed from the American Federation of Labor in both organization and methods. The benevolent intentions of the French Government, as manifested in recent years, after a settled attitude of antagonism maintained in the law toward labor unions until 1884, have given organization in many callings a false start. The decrees providing for the Bourses du Travail permit the

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

establishment of one of these centers for labor meetings and the employment of wage workers in any town of five thousand inhabitants. The Government allows each Bourse a subsidy that was meant especially for the maintenance of the labor exchange feature of the institution. From this subsidy the meeting-hall and offices of the secretaries are furnished, and telephones, letter-files, and stationery provided. The franking privilege for communications with government or municipal officials is also permitted.

The amount appropriated for the Paris Bourse du Travail alone is at present twenty-three thousand dollars a year. What benefit do the solid unions of the city receive from its privileges? The reply is that in general they do not avail themselves of the proffered help. They have headquarters for their offices and halls for their meetings irrespective of the existence of the Bourse. Nor do the leading revolutionary organizations get any share of the subsidy. On misbehavior, in the eyes of the authorities, they are excluded from the Bourse building. The result is that while the conservative Typographical Union, on the one hand, and the radical "C. G. T." Central Committee itself, on the other, have nothing to do with the Bourse, in it are the offices of a long list of secretaries whose organizations an American central labor union would have good reason to investigate carefully before according to them the right of representation. The membership of such an organization may consist merely of persons who at one time or another have entered their names in the book of employment-seekers

## UNIONISM IN THE VARIOUS NATIONS

in one of the offices of the Bourse. Few of them may have ever paid dues or assessments. These organizations may have no benefit or other fund. An ex-member of one of them, an active unionist, said in the presence of a party of visitors at the Bourse that on one occasion he had gathered some of his fellow-members together and caused himself to be appointed on a committee to examine the books of their "union." The secretary refused to show his accounts or even to recognize the committee. No regular meetings of the union were held. Yet through the secretary the organization would have the right to send a delegate to the general meetings of the "C. G. T.," and he would have a vote the same as if he represented the most solid union in the country. Worse, for the entire occupation of which it might represent only one small subdivision, this skeleton of a union could attempt to call a "general strike." This has actually happened in regard to the cooks in Paris, with sad results to all concerned. On the occasion of such strikes the men asked to walk out sometimes do so merely for the sake of sentiment. Thus workmen are subjected to loss, the community is made uneasy, the employers are disgusted, and the newspapers given a sensation, with good cause to laugh or to sneer at the follies of the working-man. After the strikers have satisfied the demands of their sanguine temperament, demonstrated liberty, equality, and fraternity, and sung the *Marseillaise*, they renew the long day, the low wage level, and the toilsome existence against which they rebelled. It is from such unions, accord-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

ing to the French Minister of Labor, Viviani, that much of the voting strength comes at the congresses of the "C. G. T." The "C. G. T." itself, however, rails against the "syndicats" (unions) that depend wholly upon the Bourses du Travail.

Very little is heard of the unions not in the national body, the "C. G. T.," yet the Minister, in a yet uncontradicted speech in the Chamber of Deputies in October last year, said that in it were represented only 322,000 unionists of the 950,000 in France, while its treasury contained at that date about twelve hundred dollars! At the labor organization congress at Marseilles, a short time before, a motion introduced by the anti-militarists had been adopted by a majority of the delegates, the vote being taken under the vicious system of voting by organizations instead of by the number of members represented. The winning delegates represented only 99,417 members while the delegates opposing the motion represented 215,000.

Of course, this whole system of organization and proceedings is out of harmony with the real name of unionism. Its effect is to put France for the present outside the domain of serious expectation in regard to constructive work to be done by the central national labor body. Yet there are great solid trade organizations in that country, with large funds in their treasuries, carrying on the work done by national unions in other countries. Among these are the unions of the miners, the printers, the railroad employes, and the metal workers, the leaders of which at the present time have a plan to reorganize the central body on the

## UNIONISM IN THE VARIOUS NATIONS

rational and just basis of a representation proportional to membership, with partisan politics set aside and due attention given to the possibilities of reasonable demands on employers backed by the funds necessary to provide regular strike-pay. Instead of a general May-day strike for eight hours, opportune demands will be made in any occupation where the promise exists of somewhat higher wages or slightly less time than in the existing workday, and instead of "direct action," signifying too often futile violence, the program calls for collective bargaining, referendum, and secret ballot before striking, and voluntary conciliation boards to deal with all disputes.

In Austria, Hungary Italy, and Switzerland partial industrialism instead of trade autonomy is in several occupations the form of organization. (I use the term "trade autonomy" here in the sense in which it is generally understood in the United States.) For example, in Italy the building trades have in the smaller cities but a single union, which includes all the workmen of the various trades connected with "wall construction"—stone-cutters, brick and stone masons, plasterers, day laborers. Plumbers and gasfitters, carpenters and joiners, and the like, are not in this "union." The printing industry finds compositors, pressmen, bookbinders, and even the type-founders amalgamated, rather than federated as they are in America. The metal-workers' union seems by its printed reports extraordinarily strong in numbers until one becomes acquainted with its make-up, into which, apparently, may enter every man who in his

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

daily labor handles any kind of metal. In the Swiss metal-workers' union are the building trades, iron and steel workers, blacksmiths and wagonmakers, ornamental iron-workers, housesmiths, iron-founders, bridge builders, and the factory mechanics who make small wares, including watches. The central labor unions of the towns of lesser importance in several countries accept as members almost any individual of the working-class or even any professed sympathizer, a state of things permitting an opening to politicians and business men with ambitions. In Switzerland there is one national labor organization that is made up of the workers at any branch of industry handling or manufacturing food or chemical products or glassware. They are known as the "Alimentary Workers' Union."

In Austria there are unions of seven nationalities—Germans, Bohemians, Slovaks, Croats, Ruthenians, Italians, and Roumanians. Of the total membership 75 per cent are German-speaking and 20 per cent Bohemian. The whole number of union members is set down in the International Secretariat report for 1909 as four hundred and eighty thousand. Very few of these unions existed before the political movement of the working-class attained considerable strength. Leaders in the political movement, becoming convinced in the course of time that there was an absolute necessity for improving the condition of the wage workers through trade-union methods, assisted in up-building the labor organizations. This explains why the latter, despite the resolutions passed at their con-



## UNIONISM IN THE VARIOUS NATIONS

gress that the unions must exist apart from the political organization, are in not a few cases officered by prominent party leaders. The unions are mostly in the first crude stages of true trade-unionism, exceptions to be noted in cases. Since "combination in restraint of trade" is illegal, the Austrian unions are outlawed. Their benefit features are carried on by means of so-called "free organizations," whose office windows where benefit dues are received may be in the same room with the union secretary's windows at which union dues are received. The party secretaries may be found on another floor in the same building, and the co-operative secretaries on still another floor. Hence, the "central" in an Austrian or Bohemian city may be an imposing structure. Something of the same state of things exists in Hungary; several of the "centrals" in Budapest are among the largest buildings in the city. In fact, in all the European Continental countries visited, to a greater or less extent, unionism was found in one form or another intermingled with partisan politics, co-operation, industrial insurance, and municipal reform. The leaders in any one of these forms of social activity were usually also leaders in another.

In Germany, however, the trade-union movement has become differentiated from all the others to a much greater degree than in any other European country. Whereas the situation in Germany when I visited Europe fourteen years ago resembled that in Austria at the present time, the remarkable growth of unionism in the last decade and a half has been ac-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

accompanied by a developing independence, in spirit, organization, leadership, and activity. The obvious gains through union processes has appealed to the general intelligence and practical turn of mind of the German workers. The "centrals" in such cities as Berlin, Munich, Cologne, and Hamburg are really union headquarters. The official reports relate to union effort. The objects of the organizations, as shown in their publications, are clearly defined, within the scope of trade-unionism. Time and again, when going about the cities named with prominent labor men, I asked the question: "To what source is due the actual change for the better in the standard of living of the working-classes in your city?" The reply invariably was: "The trade unions, first and foremost."

So far has the differentiation, to which I have referred, between the trade-unionists and the socialists of Germany developed, there is a distinct cleavage in which the latter are known as "Marxists," the former as "Revisionists." Bernstein, an "intellectual," though a Socialist, has for the past few years thrown his influence with the trade-unionists or Revisionists. For this he and the trade-unionists who are also socialists were about to be disciplined or "read out" of the party. This was to be a part of the program of the September, 1909, party congress. Asking one of Germany's foremost trade-unionists whether he would attend the Socialist party's congress and take part in the contest which the subject was sure to evoke, he replied: "I don't bother with such tomfoolery any

## UNIONISM IN THE VARIOUS NATIONS

more." At the party congress the subject was debated, but inasmuch as the trade-unionists' votes are an important socialist factor in Germany's elections, the party leaders deemed it "inexpedient" to act on the matter, and it was dropped by proceeding to "the next order of business."

The modern "house-cleaning" of cities and the governmental philanthropies as exhibited in working-class insurance fall far secondary to the results of direct union action, and in fact without union influence much of the legislation for the benefit of the workers would remain unenforced. On the whole, it can be said that the German trade unions of to-day more nearly resemble the American trade unions than do those of any other country in Europe.

Aside from Germany, the Continental countries make a poor exhibit financially in their unions as compared with America. For example, in Austria the total income in 1907 of the labor organizations, with about half a million members, was \$1,600,000; expenditures, \$1,400,000. In the same year the receipts of the International Typographical Union in America were \$1,800,000 and the expenditures \$1,640,000—a strike year—while in 1909 its receipts were \$478,000 and its expenditures \$458,000, its benefits amounting to \$308,000. The total benefits paid by all the Austrian unions combined were: Travelling, \$33,000; out-of-work, \$230,000; sick, funeral, and infirmity, \$230,000; "distress," \$80,000; total, \$573,000. The total income of the Cigarmakers' International Union of America for the last year was \$828,498.87. The bene-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

fits paid for the year were \$553,832.34, as follows: Loans to travelling members, \$46,613.44; sick benefits, \$184,755.69; death and total disability benefits, \$220,979.71; out-of-work benefits, \$101,483.50. The expenditures of the American carpenters' unions, miners' unions, and a number of others would show larger benefits paid to the members of each than the combined benefits of the labor organizations of all Austria. A number of the American international unions have singly a larger budget than all the Austrian unions together. It is to be noted that the Austrian unions include the railway men, of whom 50 per cent are organized.

As in all European countries, the printers in Austria stand at the head of proportion organized, 94 per cent. But the percentage in other trades runs: bakers, 19; miners, 23; brewers, 33; wood-workers, 20; metal-workers, 28; glass-workers, 24; hatters, 21; flour-millers, 12; barbers, 5; tailors, 6; boot and shoe workers, 8; tobacco-workers, 16; carpenters, 16; textile-workers, 14. In the majority of the Austrian unions the dues are graded, as the membership is made up of classes of workers whose wages differ greatly. For instance, the hatters, whose union takes in nearly all the employes of a factory regardless of skill or of trade distinctions, have four dues grades, paying, respectively, six, seven, eight, and twelve cents a week. The carpenters also have four grades, at six, eight, ten, and twelve cents. To the American observer a significance will attach to this statistical showing for Austrian trade-unionism, inasmuch as at the Inter-

## UNIONISM IN THE VARIOUS NATIONS

national Secretariat Congress at Paris in August the harshest and most persistent critic of our "conservative" American trade-union policy was the Austrian delegate.

The British trade unions have so long been accorded first place in labor organization by college text-book makers and other professional-class authors that it may seem an impertinence to set up a claim that such writers are years behind the facts of the situation. When the American Federation of Labor, fifteen years ago, began sending fraternal delegates to the British Trade-Union Congress, an expert first-hand investigation on the field of British unions began that has been carried on during the periods of their visits by the thirty Americans since sent over, two together each year. The claim may be made positively that only one or two of these delegates found his own trade better organized in Great Britain than it is in America, and that not one of them, viewing as a whole the trade-union movement in Great Britain, can say it is as scientifically organized, or as well prepared for militant action, or as free from the interference of hurtful external influences as the movement in America. In certain of the British unions there is some superiority in their varied forms of industrial insurance, which in their country is occupational rather than, as in America, social.

In mentioning these conclusions there is no intention to make derogatory statements. Facts only are set down, their virtue and point being in their truth. Space here permits of only a few illustrations of the general idea. The American Federation of Labor's

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

rule that there can be only one national organization for each calling has no existence in Great Britain. In the British Trade-Union Congress there are delegates representing "national" or even "district" trade or labor organizations which may have quite undefined jurisdictions, either as to occupation or geographical area. For example, there were represented at the Ipswich Congress three organizations of insurance agents, three of bakers and confectioners, two of bleachers and dyers, three of bookbinders, two of boot and shoe workers, two of carpenters, five of teamsters, two of cigarmakers, six of the garment trades, four of compositors, seven of laborers, four of engineers, five of miners, and more than a score of textile-workers. Only a third of the eighteen hundred thousand unionists represented in the Congress are united in the systematized movement allied in the General Federation of Trades to render financial aid to one another in cases of trade disputes. And in striking contrast with the American custom, no organizers are employed by either of the central national organizations. Considerable districts of England remain quite outside of unionism as well as entire branches of the trades in certain localities.

In unity and compactness of organization, progressiveness in propaganda, thoroughness and clearness in scope and purpose, militancy of spirit, soundness in finances, adaptability in administration to the ends sought, or continuity and rapidity of development, the national movement in no foreign country can compare with the American Federation of Labor.

## NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 23, 1909.*

HAVING in previous letters given my impressions with regard to matters of more serious import, I wish to say something about the almost hourly sufferings of American travellers in Europe from mosquito bites. To the sharp probes from these insects, with the resultant pain, fever, and disgust, the traveller is obliged to submit continually—at hotels and restaurants, on the railroad, and often elsewhere—as he goes seeing the sights. To illustrate: Our party, on arriving at The Hague, engaged two mosquitoes in the form of station porters to carry our hand-baggage to the bus of the Hotel “Blank,” waiting at the curb at the station exit. The station porters passed the valises over to the hotel bus porter at a point just within the station door. Nip! nip! by the two station porters. When we arrived at the hotel door both the bus porter and the bus driver asked me for what they regarded as their due drop of blood—nip! nip! Within the door of the hotel the manager informed us that all his rooms had been engaged by telegraph, but that he could give us “good rooms at a clean hotel near by,” and we took them. Two hotel porters who had carried our bits of hand-baggage into the hotel lobby asked me, as soon

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

as the manager had turned his back, for their tribute—nip! nip! Yet another porter, after taking the things a few steps down the street to the other hotel, stood by in the hallway and waited to give me his nip. Seven gouges out of my pocket of silver change before we reached our rooms! But the probes of the mosquito swarms of this hotel reached even further. The little hotel charged us Hotel "Blank" rates for our rooms, about double what would have been asked had we gone there direct and bargained for accommodations. And the dinner at the Hotel "Blank" cost us half a florin apiece more than the price set down in the guide-book. In this incident the reader sees some, but not all, of the methods of stinging which the hotel mosquitoes practice.

In Berlin, just at the moment of our departure, the *portier*, the gold-laced and brass-buttoned dignitary who browbeats lamb-like guests at European hotel entrances, handed us our laundry bill, every article of which was charged double to treble New York prices. In Vienna, tired of blood-letting to each mosquito separately in the group of servants always assembled about the door upon our departure—"the review," they themselves call this evolution—I drew the manager aside and said: "I understand that there is a way of giving tips to all hands through the management" (one bleeding, as it were); "how much extra shall I give you?" He replied: "Twenty per cent of your bill."

I was rather tickled than bitten the first time I got a nip in a European railway train. One of our party



## NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

suggested that as the second-class places were crowded we should go into a first-class compartment and await results. When the conductor, in his jim-dandy uniform, came along, he was handed our second-class tickets and a mark—a silver coin worth a paltry twenty-five cents. And he took our tickets and passed on without seeing for what class they called. The vast possibilities of cheaply purchased privileges on future trips acted as a palliative to this little sting. And the thought of what might happen if the traveller in America should try to overcome the virtue of one of our express-train conductors with “a quarter” brought all our party to see the circumstance from a humorous point of view. Truth to relate, it marked the beginning of a custom we followed—since we learned that it was general—of buying our way past any obstacle that appeared to interrupt the smoothness or comfort of our daily progress. With a little silver we henceforth obtained concessions from grand-looking policemen, soldiers on guard, vergers in churches, museum custodians. It is a common custom for the conductors of street-cars in Continental Europe to hold out their hands to receive as a tip any small change due, but first handed over to the passenger. You may have your choice in European travel: Bribe and be otherwise happy and free, or virtuously decline to bribe and be snubbed, ordered about, and forbidden to see things.

The tipping system, bad as it is becoming in America, is in Europe universal, and accepted by all classes of travellers as an inevitable nuisance. It often bor-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

ders on blackmail. Tippers go raving mad in recounting their wrongs under the tyrannies of the system, the newspapers by turns rail or make merry over it, the hotel-keepers and other employers of the class have their excuse that they pay wages to their servants—but the tipping goes on forever. Why is it? Who is to blame?

These questions I asked representative waiters—for representatives these men have, many of them being organized in benefit societies and a small proportion in a sort of trade union. But one answer was given. The system is detestable to every man or woman of the serving class possessing the least degree of self-respect. It is demoralizing to all who either receive or give tips. The real beneficiaries of the system are the employers. An end to it, with a fair standard of wages, would be a boon of the first order to the employes, a means of compelling hotel proprietors to put their business on a basis of fair dealing, and an incalculable aid to the tranquillity and pleasure of the general public.

“I have often talked over the system of tipping with my fellow-waiters,” said an educated man of the calling, when I brought up the subject to him. (Parenthetically, perhaps I should here say that since this man speaks fluently and writes correctly four languages, has travelled much and observed well on the great tourist routes of the world, has studied some of the serious works of writers on sociology, and has withal acquired agreeable manners, he may be called educated. Without doubt, had he a few thousands

## NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

of vulgar dollars he might buy himself a title as Baron and marry in our best society; but he is above that; he has a craving for walking in the light of truth.) "All of us would like to see the system abolished," he assured me, "except a small minority who in their moral make-up resemble pirates, and who cruise in places where riches abound. But the whole situation is one in which reform is most difficult.

"Among the people who patronize hotels and restaurants there is a considerable element that, either for a week of frolic or during their life-long holiday, are regardless of the value of their tips, and through their vanity enjoy throwing away a percentage of their ready money. Then, also, are those grateful for the little kindly attentions which a good waiter or porter knows how to bestow. As for the proprietors and managers, their business is based on tips as one of the considerable forms of revenue. For instance, in many German hotels the waiters are obliged to give the cashier five or more marks additional on every hundred marks of checks. In Austria, at the larger restaurants the customer tips three persons after a meal — the head-waiter who collects the payments, the waiter who serves, and the *piccolo*, or beer-boy. The hotel management sells to the head-waiter the monopoly privileges of the tips. The head-waiter then provides the newspapers and magazines on file, the city directories and time-tables and other books of reference called for by patrons, and a part of the outfit of the waiters. Of course, it is an old and true story, that of the big restaurants of Paris, and to-day

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

of other cities and of certain fashionable watering-places, that the waiters pay so much cash a day for their jobs. The pestering of guests to buy drinks comes, not so much from commissions, as from orders of the management that the custom of drinking at meals must be encouraged. In Germany it is usual at the larger restaurants to add half a mark to the cost of a meal if the guest drinks plain water only.

“European hotels generally take on more servants than are necessary. It makes a showing of being prepared for a big business. Then the servants must redouble their artful moves to extort tips. Porters not infrequently work without any salary at all. Chambermaids, who are paid by the month, receive absurdly low pay. Financing a hotel or restaurant is based on the tips as a margin yielding on the average a fixed amount. To make them reach the required sum, all the employes are obliged to manoeuvre so as to put up a showing of earning the travellers’ extra silver pieces. Coppers rarely are expected as tips now. It has become common for railway-station porters to demand half a franc for what once brought them a few sous or pfennigs.

“One outcome of running a hotel on the tipping system developed to the point of bamboozling or worrying the guests out of petty extras at every turn is that each year there is an emigration of European waiters to America to get places in hotels taken by European managers, who, depending upon their servants to work the system at its worst for the guests, can make a business pay both manager and landlord

## NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

where an American manager, paying wages, would fail. While shopkeepers have in the course of time been forced to adopt the one-price system, the drift in the hotel business has been continuously away from the per diem rate. Another point—the big tourist agencies for European travel are certainly in some sort of partnership with the hotels for which they sell coupon tickets. Those on the inside of the hotel business in Europe know that these hotels are patronized largely by Americans, spendthrifts on their trip, staying a few days at a time and usually speaking English only, and therefore disinclined to hunt up stopping-places for themselves. Hence at such hotels there is a harvest for everybody — a situation which eventually leads to bad food, bad cooking, bad service, and a hold-up at every turn of the guest.”

In going over the possible methods of a change for the better in this sorry business, my waiter friend said that first of all he believed that a big trade union must be formed of hotel help. Tipping must give way to fair wages. The public could give its share of assistance. He recommended that guests at either hotels or restaurants should follow these rules, notes of which were taken on the spot: “Patronize, whenever possible, the hotels and eating-houses where tips are forbidden; there are such places in England and on the Continent. Refuse importunities for tips, either through words or ‘hanging around,’ where there has been no service. Where, for your own comfort, you feel constrained to tip, give the bare minimum. Whenever possible, do not tip at all.” He added, and I felt

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

that he had me also in mind: "Some easy-natured people believe they tip the nearest itching palm to them because of their sympathy with the poor. Reflection should teach them that there can sometimes be real charity without public demonstration." True. Church people might, with this purpose, give through their own congregational agencies. In London, the American traveller, wishing to do the best with his withheld tip-appropriation, might send it to the Westminster Children's Aid Society; in Rome, to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; in Berlin, to the semi-public lodging-houses. Everywhere, trade-unionists can always give first to the genuine and pressing claims of their own organizations. But, of course, if the tipper gives, not from motives of good-heartedness, but mere vanity, all advice is thrown away on him. The hotel-keeper will continue growing rich on him and despising him. Other folks in Europe may have good reason to tell him, what a plain-spoken Swiss citizen told a friend of mine: "You Americans, with your dirty dollars, are ruining my country."

While it is true that through organization the workers may be a factor in reforming the worst abuses in the European business of catering to the traveller as he eats and sleeps, I do not see how any human agency may soon improve his condition as he actually travels. The European railway system must certainly be regarded by every American as in almost every respect an example of "how not to do it," except that it gets you finally to your destination. One

## NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

of the very least of its drawbacks is the general bribery of guards or conductors. The whole system, started wrong, has gone on keeping wrong.

The ordinary Continental European passenger-car, reminding Americans of one of Barnum's menagerie vans in size and build, has a half-dozen compartments like dog-kennels, the first and second class slightly varied in upholstery, and the third usually having only bare boards. To get in or out of a car, except from the larger station high platforms, is a steep step-ladder climb. The bad air in a compartment, at night especially, when the Europeans close all the windows tight, gives an American an experience somewhat like being confined in summer in a freight box-car in the Chicago stock-yards. Barely enough cars are made up in a train at a main station to carry away the travelers who have bought tickets, another car or two often being added at the last moment to accommodate the crowd clamoring for places. At the big stations the porters, knowing all the tricks, take care of their patrons through pushing brutally ahead and reserving seats by putting hand-baggage on them. The American, puzzled by divisions of the train into cars of three classes, and the cars themselves into compartments for smokers, non-smokers, and women alone, usually gets left, to take one of the poorest places or to stand. Repeatedly, in Germany, Austria, Italy, and France, I looked on in amazement at a train-load of excited passengers filling up from the crowds of the station platforms and asked myself if I was in a civilized country. After the start, wrangling over seats

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

and overhead rack-room for hand-baggage was a common occurrence. Trunks usually costing extra, the size of the ordinary bag in Europe is double that carried in America, and the sight of two large racks in a compartment charged up to the roof with valises, suitcases, handboxes, rugs, and parcels, puts the American tourist in a state of fear lest things fall and crash on his head. It was to be noticed that military officers had valises that were really trunks carried into the compartments, and—against the law—placed on the floor between the two benches. At night there is but one dim light to a compartment, so reading is not ordinarily possible. No drinking-water is to be had. The baggage-check is unknown in any country in which I travelled in Europe. No announcement is made of the station which the train is approaching. Our party paid twelve dollars for extra weight of baggage from Paris to Amsterdam, though our trunks were few. Besides, the stings of the various railroad mosquitoes were so numerous that throughout our long journeys we were smarting from them or listening to the tales of other travellers as they indignantly or humorously described their bites, new and old.

The much-talked-of low fares of European railroads apply to slow third-class travel without baggage and not counting the petty charges and tips squeezed out of the passengers. First-class tickets are just about double our express rates, day coach. Fast trains of any kind are in most countries infrequent.

One of the nuisances of European travel is customs examinations. I have passed three in one day. In



## NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

some countries the traveller is halted on leaving the station in a town or city and questioned about the contents of his hand-baggage, the European municipality itself in many instances having its own tax on incoming goods from any other part of the same country. Customs officers have at midnight suddenly entered the sleeping-compartments of the passengers on the train in which I was travelling, including my own, not stopping to knock even at the ladies' rooms. The European sleeping-car, by the way, has its berths running crosswise and not lengthwise, with board partitions between the compartments. The dancing of the train on the tracks, like that of a springless wagon on cobblestones, of itself would prevent sleep, and when to this the almost total lack of ventilation is added the night becomes one of horror. On my final trip to Italy my companion and myself sat up three full nights in preference to taking to the sleeping-car. As to the customs "visits" at frontiers, I was called on to submit to a score of them. Usually they were perfunctory, though on several occasions the officials were rough and overbearing. On no occasion was our party treated with greater consideration than when we landed at New York on our homecoming.

When the topic of railroads is up the European always has one trump card to play against the American—safety. When asked for particulars he refers to the incontestable fact that the European newspapers frequently contain despatches describing railway accidents in America. If my readers will pardon

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

a slight digression at this point, I may say that much of the news from America printed in the European Press is a reflection of the demand existing in those circles which wish the people of the United States to be represented as crude, vulgar, ridiculous, or blood-thirsty. The big railway accident is consequently presented in its horrors on every possible occasion. When the investigator of the subject really gets down to the statistics, the United States does not make so bad a showing in all particulars on this question. I take this passage from a current railroad authority: "Last year 316 of the American companies, operating 124,050 miles, killed no passengers in a train accident. That mileage is greater than the combined mileage of England, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Italy. The passenger mileage of these roads exceeds by a billion the enormous British passenger mileage. Their freight mileage exceeds all Europe's, with Japan, Argentine, and Australia added." Most of the accidents in America take place on the poorer half of the railroads, and a very large proportion of the deaths are of tramps, who in Europe generally are not allowed on the tracks. The great wrong—aye, the crime committed by our railroads—is not to the passengers, but to the immense numbers of employes injured, maimed, and killed. It is, indeed, terrible to read that ten thousand deaths in a single year have occurred on the 230,000 miles of American railroads through accidents. But it is quite equally shocking to read that on the 23,000 miles of railways in England there were killed in ten years nearly five thousand

## NUISANCES OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

persons and more than thirty thousand injured. In travelling on the main lines in America one is just as safe as on any European railway, while as to the decencies, freedom from annoyances, the enjoyment of conveniencies and comforts, the American system is immeasurably the superior.

## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 30, 1909.*

AMERICAN travellers abroad comment frequently on the difference between the Old World and the New in social and political "atmosphere." If this quality interprets itself through the topics up for popular discussion, the way they are debated and the means by which governing opinion brings about common action, it must be said that especially the "atmosphere" of the labor and social reform movement in Europe differs widely from that in America. Conditions of organization, suffrage, rights, legal standing, education, nationality, and standards of living differ. Necessarily distinctive proposals for immediate changes characterize each European country. But, apart from these, certain sentiments and ideas affecting us but little in America play a highly important part in the general unrest of Europe.

First to be noted is the extent to which the anti-war feeling prevails among the working-classes. There is, of course, growing anti-war talk among our own people. But, as responded to by our working-classes in general, the sentiment manifests itself as a principle and as an expression of sympathy with our brothers abroad rather than the announcement of

## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

a settled determination to oppose war at all hazards.

In Europe anti-militarism signifies a challenge to governments by the workers, a defiance by them of the classes that stand to win much and lose little by the killing of thousands of common soldiers in battle, and a deep-seated resolve to refuse to take the last step in what is termed "military duty"—that is, for one set of laborers to shoot down on the field of carnage other equally well-meaning and simple-minded toilers between whom and themselves there should exist in this age of awakened conscience and general enlightenment a fraternity strengthened by a common suffering. Were we in America to believe what mention is occasionally made in our European Press despatches on the subject, a few fanatics, such as Hervé among the French is depicted, are responsible for an unwarranted denunciation of war and militarism. But while Hervé and his kind may provide the "strong-story stuff" for reporters' lively pens, to amuse shallow readers thousands of miles away from the theatre of the agitation, the master players at the game of statesmanship who stand ready to plunge the nations into the frightful arena of slaughter know full well that their next order "To the front!" is to be followed immediately by demonstrations for peace on the part of the masses of the countries involved that will mark a new era in the annals of Europe.

To appreciate what may happen in regard to this, we on this side of the Atlantic must realize that all Europe at every moment is actually at war. And this

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

has been the case permanently during the life of every man of the present generation. A "class," made up of all the able-bodied youths of twenty years, goes, by force, into the armies of the nations every year. The most completely and surely successful business undertakings in all European countries are those which provide war material—guns, ships, accoutrements, provisions. The dominant social and political element has as its backbone the army officers whose trade is to obey, either in defence or aggression. The war is on continually — up to the point of beginning the killing. Society's pulse indicating the effects of this warfare is in the stock-exchange. From this fact arises the importance of every Press mention of the "alliances," the movements of the crowned heads, the speeches of prime ministers, the avowals of high army officers, the international "incidents," many bits of news which to the average American have little importance. To the subject of any country in Europe items of this character may signify coming success or failure, joy or sorrow. His business, in which his all is invested, may soon be in danger of being wiped out; his boy, who is in the army, may in a few weeks be sent to his death on the battle-field. To the great masses of the nations, the wage earners, this situation of incessant and senseless hostility has become intolerable. They intend to resist stubbornly any reckless heads of State that may set out to employ them as mere counters in a clash of force over questions which are alien to their own great interest in social justice. On this point, "The working-man has no country."

## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

Every one of the international congresses of the various trade unions and other working-class organizations performs a service to humanity in suppressing hatred and promoting brotherhood among the peoples and races who speak different tongues. Once that Engelmann, Preatoni, Desjardins, Smith, Kravatski, Van Waerts, and Savdos, representing internationally organized workers, either of a single calling or of many, have met in one of the industrial cities of the Continent, discussed their common causes and broken bread, they will forever refuse to kill one another merely because authority has put them in different uniforms. And the spirit of this refusal will spread among all the organized workers in their own countries who have heard their anti-war reports on returning home. Further, all the workers, even the unorganized, will read of what is thus passing and yearn for news of peace, instead of responding to the continual transparently selfish and cruel appeals to a patriotism too often a composite of the self-interests of politicians and of popular superstitions as to the wickedness of hated foreigners.

Not only the laboring-classes, but many men of means and superior education who have their place in the scheme of production in our present industrial organism, are to-day decrying war and boldly advocating radical expression against its possibility. During my tour I heard many men of this social class freely expressing such sentiments. "The war spark, which may burst into a flame," said one to me, "is always to be seen somewhere—in Morocco, Armenia,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

the Balkans, in the movements of the British navy. I believe there would have been war in Europe within the last five years, under one pretext or another, had not the rulers known that there is a startling revelation awaiting the world from the working-classes in all European countries the day any one of the great powers begins hostilities with another."

Never was I more affected by the spectacle at any gathering than when in Paris two months ago at a mass-meeting nearly five thousand persons enthusiastically applauded German, Italian, English, Spanish, Dutch, and Hungarian labor representatives as they in unmeasured terms denounced international war and emphatically supported anti-war resolutions. Indeed, it is the general consensus of opinion that the final obstacle to a war of nations in Europe to-day is the determined adverse attitude of the workers in the different countries.

Another phase of the working-class movement in Europe but little understood in America is that which the European press agencies in collusion have decided to term Anarchistic, while the fact is that revolutionary State Socialism presents much the same program. No description of the present situation in Europe comes up to the truth which ignores the degree to which the revolutionary sentiment has hold of large numbers in nearly every country. The execution of Francesco Ferrer served to make newspaper-reading Americans who had theretofore known little or nothing about it acquainted with the teachings of this form of Socialism. Off hand, according to their



## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

habit, the European contributors to our Press are prepared to repeat to their readers that Anarchistic revolutionists are to be found only in France, Italy, and Spain. The fact is, whether under a change of name or not, a large part of the "educated proletariat" in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and even England, is permeated with the essence of the teaching that since the laws of monarchies at present are the outcome of force exercised by the shrewd and operated through vested privileges and vulgar prejudices and superstitions, each individual, instead of obeying the resultant hodge-podge of statutes, is free to follow his own ideals of morality or citizenship. This thought is obvious in the writings of several of the most popular German and British authors of the type of Shaw ✓ in England, a fact the insidious potency of which our own newspaper readers have been slow to recognize. They have long known, however—those who, to any extent, follow this line of study—that a great deal of literature current in the Latin countries abounds in such doctrines. The philosophy on which State Socialism is grounded—the inevitable development of capitalism in every industry to the point at which "the wage system must be abandoned"—is countered by that other philosophy which teaches that every one who has courage enough and intelligence enough may at once, in the present stage of social progress, clear away sufficient of the hurtful effects of capitalism to permit for himself an independent course. "The majority has no more rights than the minority, the millions no greater rights than one." This is one of

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

the doctrines enunciated. The most active strikers of southern Italy have been led by men professing such principles and calling themselves "extreme individualists." Congresses of the same order of revolutionists have been recently held in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland. From them come teachings such as have actuated the Barcelona wing of the Spanish revolutionists. In France the men at the head of the "C. G. T." (Confédération Generale du Travail) are following in their practice the chief principle of this school, known as "direct action." Yvetot, in his "A. B. C. Syndicaliste," says: "Direct action consists in making the employer give way through fear or his interest." While preaching the general strike, this leader commends the individual strike, every person being free to decide upon the limits of his own activities. "*Le sabotage*," which in Great Britain is known as "ca' canny"—the employe neglecting his employer's interests systematically while pretending to be at work—is one of the forms of direct action. Nothing could better illustrate the difference in spirit between the American and the Continental European working-men than this practice, which I have never known to be even tacitly recognized by any body of wage workers in America—except in instances, office-holders. One of Yvetot's amusing examples of *le sabotage* is this: "A salesman in a shop could give exact and full measure in selling a piece of goods instead of short measure, as his employer would have him do." The leaders of this division of the mass of workers in Europe in revolt assert that through their

## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

multiplicity of small strikes, their "*sabotage*," their anti-military campaign, their street agitation, their repetition at attempts at a general strike—which on several occasions in different countries have been followed by great changes in the franchise as well as in economic respects—they will worry from society more benefits to the workers than can possibly come from parliamentary Socialism. They assert that while they have been abstaining from voting, but incessantly stirring up discontent, often manifested in bold illustrations of their direct action, they have been the main factors in forcing from employers a shorter workday and from governments the weekly rest day, which all the talking and bill-introducing in a generation by Socialist members of the various parliaments had failed to do. They consider the eight-hour day, rendering self-education and improved physical condition possible to the workers, worth more than all the pension, sick fund, or charitable schemes instituted through government.

A phase of the European movement not possible among us is shown in the importance accorded to "intellectuals." This is explainable in part by the illiteracy of the lower stratum of many Continental European laborers, especially in southern Italy, Spain, Austria, and Hungary, and in part by the start given to the political movement of the masses on the Continent before the day of trade-unionism. When I asked in Italy: "How is it that such strikes as you have just described to me were led by college men or others not of the occupation engaged?" the reply was:

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

"The strikers were too ignorant to organize themselves and negotiate with their employers." In northern Italy and Austria what trade-unionism there is has been mostly developed out of the political party, the old-time leaders more or less holding to their places.

In Germany some of the bookwriters and "Herr Professors" are still parliamentary leaders, but the trade unions are officered, led, and in many cases represented in the Reichstag, by men from their own ranks. The considerable corps of secretaries of semi-public semi-philanthropic bodies do much writing on social subjects, a great part of it necessarily favorable to unions. In England, Sidney Webb, for example, has a place in the esteem of labor leaders on account of the historic value of his works on labor, but politically their support of him has been weak. It would be difficult in this country for any writer on the subject to attract the attention Webb once did in England, perhaps because, owing to the youth of our national existence, the same need for such work does not here exist. That the "intellectuals" find less play for their rôle as the level of education moves upward is shown by the fact that the best labor organizations are invariably officered and led by members of their own ranks. In general the "intellectual" as a leader occupies a dubious position in the eyes of his constituents as well as the general public. He may be sincere and disinterested, no doubt he often is, and he may be doing some commendable work, but he knows his kind is to be tolerated by the rank and file only so long as

## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

no one among themselves can be found to replace him, while the intellectuals not in the unions or radical organizations have little for him but bitter criticism. Said a university professor to me: "You will observe that the intellectuals are nearly all in politics as labor representatives; rarely will you find them advising true trade-unionism, for then they would be personally shunted off from a coveted career. I have repeatedly seen such men elected by the working-classes as legislators, whence they got themselves into administrative places, only to find an excuse some day for going over to another party."

The idea of a crusade springing from the doctrines of a "savior of society" is to some extent yet fostered on the European Continent at the big mixed headquarters of "the party," the voluntary co-operative societies and the unions. It usually finds visual expression in a portrait of Marx on the wall, perhaps flanked by others—in Germany, Lassalle; in France, Louis Blanc; in Italy, Mazzini—together with local philosophers or poets having a place in the hearts of the people. But everywhere I found the leaders at headquarters occupied, not with speculative philosophies, but the live questions of the hour. They wanted representatives in Parliament to fight for certain needed rights or the practical measures immediately demanded by the masses. They were agitating fair play for their co-operative ventures, or aid for locked-out thousands in an industry, or measures for schools, for women, for the children. Several times I opened up the subject of the workableness of the "Co-opera-

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

tive State," the possible undesirability of the total overthrow of the present social system, or the coming catastrophe to capitalism. Of course every one knew the litany, sermon, and invocation for this Socialist text, to be repeated in public speech-making, but face to face individually in conversation the whole subject faded away to the misty realms of the imagination. Positively, I never found one man in my trip ready to go further into constructive Socialism than to repeat perfunctorily its time-worn generalities. On the other hand, I met men whom I knew years ago, either personally or through correspondence or by their work, as active propagandists of the Socialists' theoretical creed, who are now devoting their energies to one or the other practical forms of social betterment—trade-unionism, co-operation, legal protection to the workers—and who could not be moved to speak of utopianism.

Certain other phases of social agitation different from our American movement arose, as I have pointed out, from emigration and its causes, from unemployment, from voluntary co-operation, from regarding the position of wage workers as lifelong, from the political privileges of the "upper classes" or from a rudimentary national economic development, as in Austria, Hungary, and southern Italy.

It is only on looking broadly at the land question in European countries that the American can appreciate the land policy of the United States, for we have had a consistent underlying principle in our policy as applied not only to Government lands, but to our

## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

methods of eminent domain and taxation — namely, that the people are to share in all the benefits. In no European country are the “crown lands” open to a homestead law. The abuses of a mistaken land policy, with enormous holdings in the hands of a few, are evident in Hungary, Austria, England, and Italy. The people are aroused on this question in Italy, where cultivation of land within a certain area about Rome is now compulsory, and in England, where a small proportion of the unearned increment is proposed to be taken through the budget taxation, in part from lands not hitherto taxed at all. The working-men all over Europe point to Switzerland and France, where the inheritance laws keep the land subdivided, and say there is no emigration from these countries. In fact, as compared with Great Britain, France has little unemployment. The land problems are always mentioned by Europe’s leading labor men when talking about coming economic changes.

Circumstances constrained me to take notice, day by day, of one characteristic of Europeans in general. It was their ignorance of America. Not one man in ten of any walk of life among those I met had the United States point of view regarding America on any subject. Many were generous in their sentiments toward us, but knowledge of us they had little. Geographically, politically, industrially, socially — they saw us only as in convex or concave mirrors.

As others might long for heaven, large numbers of the working-classes of Europe sigh to get to America,

## LABOR IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

"land of riches, land of liberty, land of freedom in thought, land of education; land of joy, peace, and uninterrupted family happiness, since the nightmare of the army has there no existence." The pessimist school of revolutionists, on the other hand, depict our trust "magnates" as monsters "sucking the life-blood" of their "slaves," and declare that the working-people are commonly groaning under the dire consequences of the "iron law of wages," except the trade-unionists, who they say form an "aristocracy of labor" in unholy alliance with "cannibalistic capital."

X In Naples a story bordering on the grotesque was told of a certain emigration agent, who, in the old days when such a thing was possible, on hearing, just before a vessel steamed off for 'America,' that the emigrants to whom he had sold passage were excited upon finding that some of their tickets were for one point in "America" and some for another, went among them and gave those bound for New York ten cents each to pay "their street-car fare" to New York from Buenos Ayres, whither the vessel was bound. Whether or not this could be possible, very few persons whom I met seemed capable of making any more distinction between North America and South America than we ourselves can between Afghanistan and Baluchistan.

The Old World is not our world. Its social problems, its economic philosophies, its current political questions are not linked up with America. All the people of the globe may be on the broad highway to

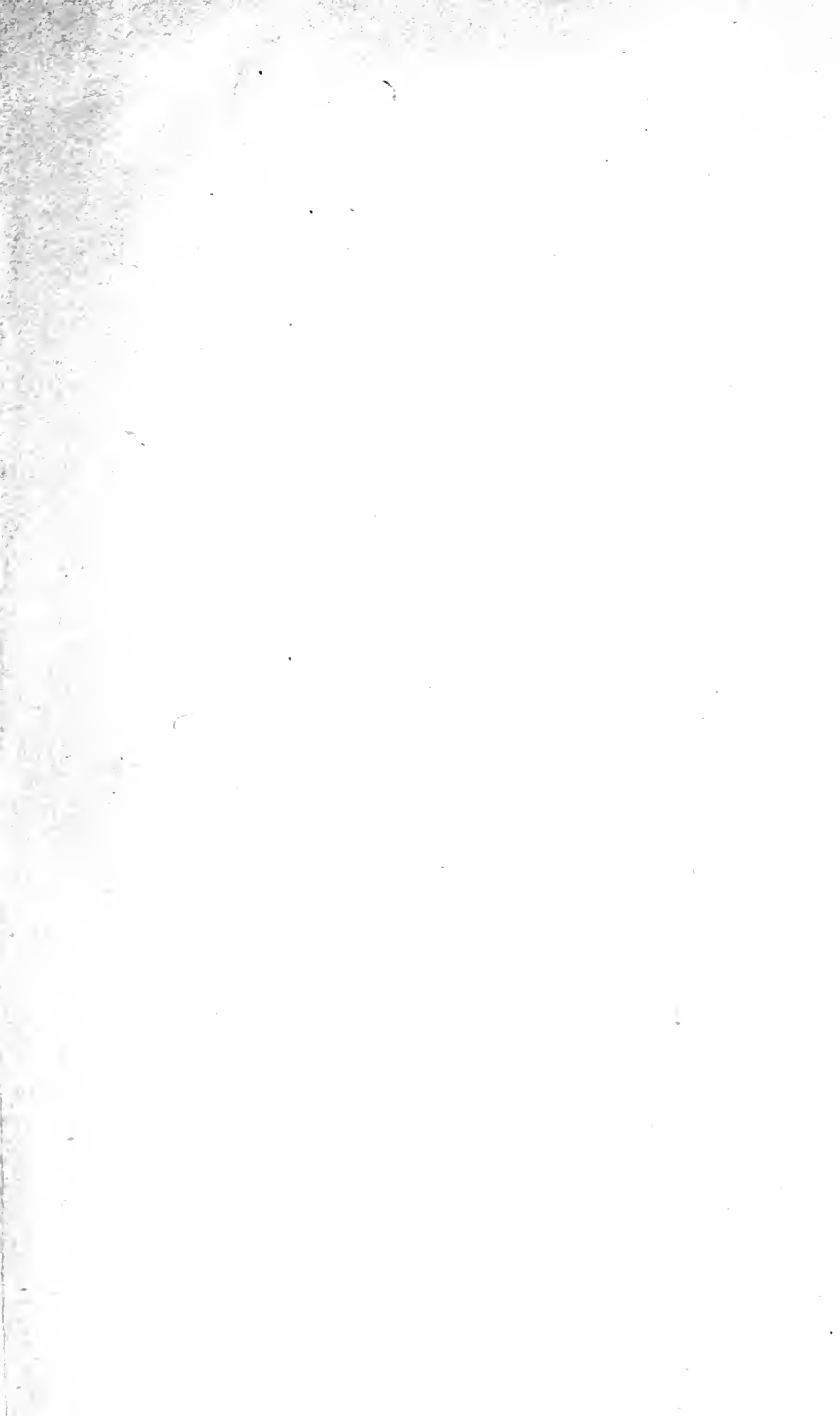


## OLD AND NEW WORLD CONTRASTS

social justice, peace among men of all tongues, and universal brotherhood, but all the nations and governments have not reached the same points on the road. In the procession, America is first.

THE END





# **RETURN TO → CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT** **202 Main Library**

LOAN PERIOD 1	2	3
<b>HOME USE</b>		
4	5	6

## **ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS**

1-month loans may be renewed by calling 642-3405

6-month loans may be recharged by bringing books to Circulation Desk

Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date

## **DUE AS STAMPED BELOW**

RET'D AUG 16 1982	APR 12 1991	
SEP 23 1986	JUN 12 1991	
<del>8-12-87</del>	Sept 12, 1991	
11/12/87	Dec 11, 1991	
AUTO. DISC FEB 5 '87	3/12/92	
	AUTO. DISC.	
MAY 13 1987	DEC 16 1991	
9/2	CIRCULATION	
12/22	MAY 16 1997	
	AUTO. DISC.	
OCT 21 1987		

GENERAL LIBRARY - U.C. BERKELEY



8000837591

5C

HD 4855

, G7

226456

*Gompers*

